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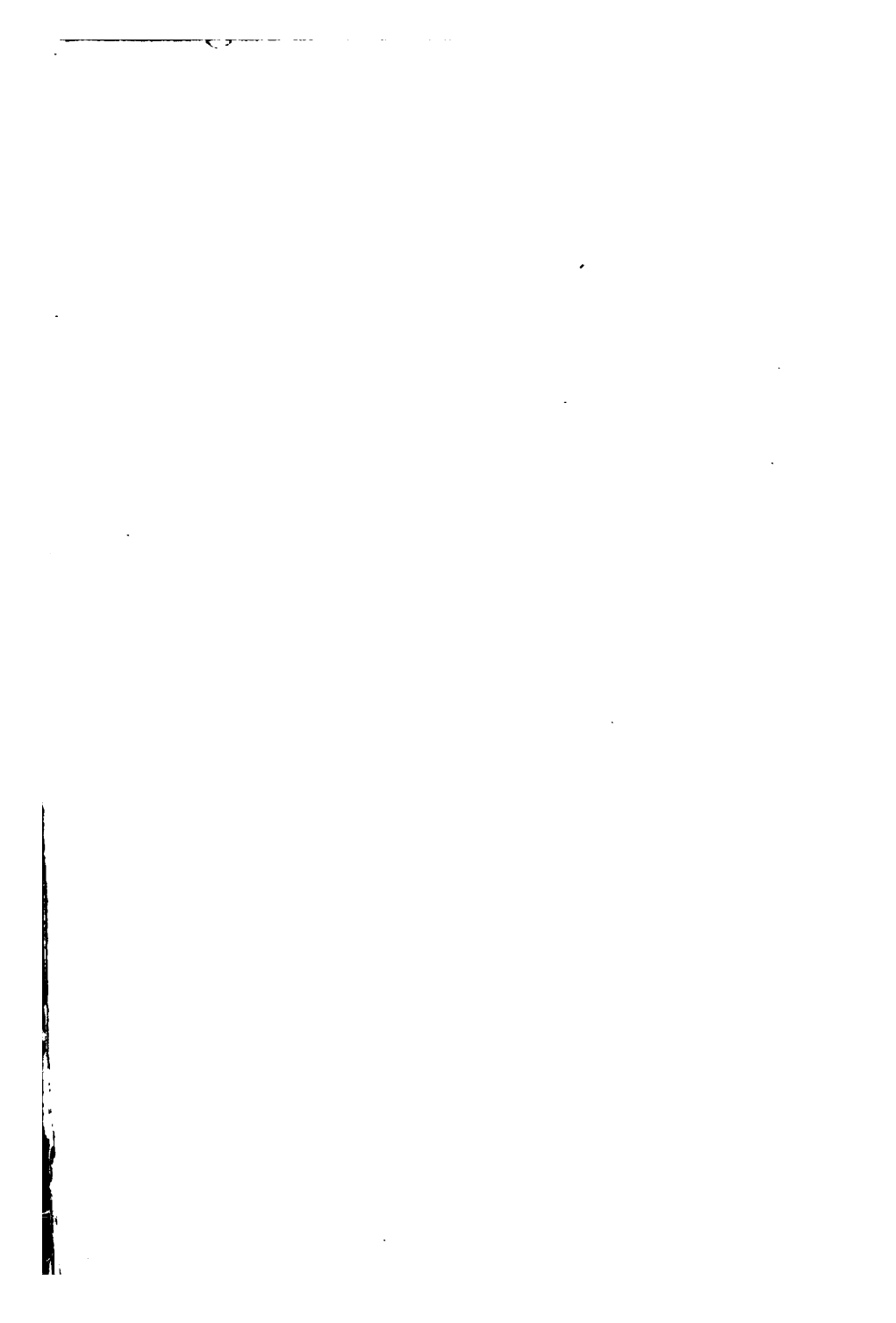


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**ORPHEUS AND THE SIRENS.**



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# ORPHEUS AND THE SIRENS

*A DRAMA IN LYRICS*

BY

VIRGINIA VAUGHAN



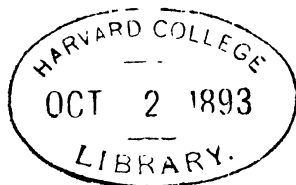
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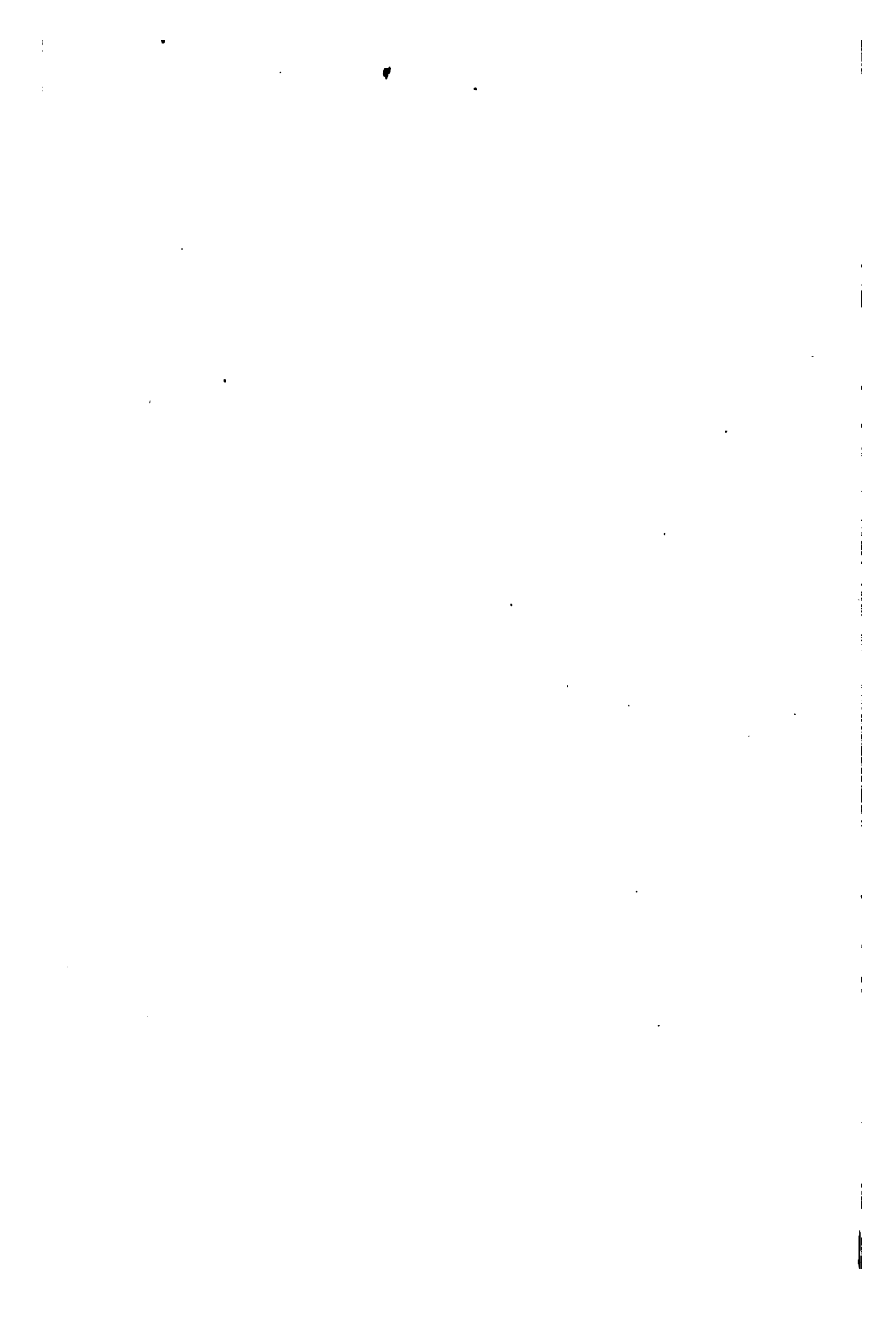
TO  
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,  
POET AND STATESMAN,  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.



## ARGUMENT.

THE famous ship of the Argonautic Expedition is approaching the fatal shore of the Sirens. Orpheus, Apollo's son, opposes to the witchery of their strains the sweeter harmony of his sacred lyre and celestial song, that so he may inspire his companions and preserve them from imminent destruction. The victims of the Sirens—lost mariners whom they have ensnared and betrayed—seek likewise to warn and guard the imperilled sailors. Dwelling in the dim caverns of humiliation and defeat, fed with fears and regrets, they have not therefore utterly lost their former hopes and aspirations, although they have no longer the power to carry them into effect. The Sirens employ all their arts to deceive Orpheus and entice Argo's heroic crew, but in vain. In the contest between themselves and the Bard they are defeated, and the heroes, loved by the gods, by a supreme effort wrest from fierce temptation Peace and Victory.

LONDON, *January 2, 1882.*



# ORPHEUS AND THE SIRENS.

ORPHEUS.

SONG FIRST.

I.

5  
URANIA, goddess bright, from heaven descend,  
Strong in my aid ; and thou, belovèd sire,  
Apollo, with benignant aspect bend  
O'er thy imperilled son : awake my lyre,  
And teach my voice, tumultuous with desire,  
As sways the trembling reed a tempest strong,  
With zeal divine these heroes to inspire ;  
Aroused to battle now with death and wrong ;  
Bright Phœbus, hear my prayer, and quicken thou my  
song.

R

## II.

Come, gather round me straight in Argo's prow,  
Ye way-worn mariners ; true hearts and brave  
By fate assailed. Mark with soft ebb and flow  
How tenderly the lapping, lipping wave—  
O therefore from the gods protection crave—  
Enzones with dazzling smile yon gleaming shore,  
Where death dwells, splendour-veiled. A yawning  
grave  
That soft enchantment hides. Lo, help implore,  
Lest, wrecked upon these isles, we sink to rise no more !

## III.

Death ye fear not, yet now O fear to gaze  
On these fair scenes and phantom-haunted skies,  
Whence goddess-shapes that ravish and amaze,  
Dream-like, with golden locks and starry eyes,  
Alluring bend ; the songs half heard, and sighs,  
At whose appeal the vital spirits fail,  
That ravish soul and sense with soft surprise,  
Tremble thereat, O ye with passion pale,  
Better the jackal's shriek and death-struck warrior's  
wail.

IV.

Nay, fear them not, the subtle songs of death,  
 Though with the rippling waves they gently blend,  
 And with the hovering zephyr's sighing breath  
 Mingle and sigh ; ye whom the gods befriend,  
 And ever in your need swift succour send ;—  
 Implore the radiant throng to hover near,  
 And once again their strong protection lend ;  
 Uplift those haggard brows, forlorn with fear,  
 And eyes of sunless gloom quenched by the secret tear.

V.

Courage, true hearts, whom the Immortals love ;  
 But let them now their former deeds surpass ;  
 Let Hera aid us in the courts above,  
 That through these shining waters, smooth as glass,  
 This mirror of deceit we safely pass ;  
 'Mid shoals of death and cliffs of treason glide,  
 More dread than dragon fierce or bull of brass,  
 The Sirens and their silver songs deride,  
 And free upon the main our happy fate abide.

## VI.

Dear to the gods are prayer and sacrifice !  
Pour forth your souls to them like fragrant wine,  
Rich treasures pledge, and so their aid entice,  
With faith invoked. Bright Ones, propitious shine,  
And incense shall ascend from many a shrine,  
Seeking your thrones, at festival and fast,  
And your pure altars garlands fresh entwine ;  
Our haven blest when we have won at last,  
And, treading Grecian soil, forget the troubled past.

## VII.

In their own kingdoms then called forth to reign,  
These princes proud your glory will declare,  
And, bound by sacred vows, your laws sustain ;  
By our example taught, men will beware,  
With fear and horror, Pleasure's deadly snare,  
And Sin's reproach. The happy lands at peace  
Temples will build and ancient shrines repair.  
Arouse, ye heroes of the Golden Fleece,  
Your prize so nobly won untarnished bear to Greece !



VIII.

Hear from my favoured lips the song inspired,  
 Known to the sacred gods in early days,  
 Which great Apollo sings with frenzy fired,  
 Enwreathed his beaming brow with living bays,  
 When all the bright Olympians hear his lays :  
 The world-old rhyme he sings, of time and fate,  
 Of life and shadowed death, of love and praise,  
 When they have met laws to co-ordinate,  
 The solemn past adjudge, and present consecrate.

IX.

Heed now alone the music of my voice,  
 Nor from my lyre let baser thoughts estrange,  
 And, though with perils girt, heroes, rejoice ;  
 For I will tell ye now things high and strange,  
 Of Love that changes not when all things change,  
 Of constant Law, and Fate's remorseless stroke,  
 And how the atoms their small ranks arrange,  
 And how the early gods from sleep awoke,  
 When day upon the earth in pristine splendour broke.

## X.

And of mankind and the world's government ;  
Of heroes who from battle-fields return  
With victory crowned and bannered with content,  
Who from afar their happy homes discern,  
While on the mountain peaks glad beacons burn,  
And loud with cheer and shout their names are  
    blest :  
As Grecian hearts for ye shall throb and yearn,  
O, Argonauts, when ye at last find rest,  
Beholding in old age accomplished your high quest.

## XI.

First in the dread beginning Chaos reigned,  
The womb of being, shapeless, vague, forlorn ;  
From whence, ere order sweet had been attained,  
The primal deities obscure were born ;  
Night, horrible, unbrightened by the morn,  
By fell chimeras haunted, Fear and Hate,  
That in the darkness shrieked, voices of scorn,  
And throned impalpable in hideous state,  
Gaunt Nemesis and ghastly Death and Time and Fate.

XII.

With mystic smile from slumber then awoke  
 Eternal Love ; to whom all things deferred ;  
 And, 'mid discordant sounds, with soft voice spoke ;  
 Sending his spirit forth and living word,  
 Whose quickening breath the pregnant darkness  
                     stirred,  
 O'erbrooding the dim void ;—Eros, unseen,  
 A presence felt, a silence that was heard ;  
 Immutable, ineffable, serene ;  
 The first of gods who is, and evermore has been.

XIII.

Then from confusion and terrific strife,  
 Now first beheld, the witness of his might,  
 And source henceforth of every form of life,  
 The god invisible created light ;  
 The orbs illumining of day and night,  
 The throbbing torches in whose quenchless blaze  
 Twofold he shone, revealed to sense and sight ;  
 Both life and death in those far-flashing rays,  
 Creation and decay and all his secret ways.

## XIV.

The heavens he fashioned next, a glorious birth,  
Bright Uranus, and steeped in balmy rest,  
Deep-bosomed Gea, his fruitful bride, the earth,  
Enfolded in his vast cerulean breast,  
By starry space included and possest ;  
From whose prolific womb and deep embrace,  
By dropping dews and zephyrs mild carest,  
Irradiate sprang full many a stately race,  
'Mid whom majestic walked the Titans clothed with  
    grace.

## XV.

Olympus then was wrought, a fair domain,  
By sunbeams woven and the wandering wind,  
Where those proud deities might fitly reign,  
Instinct with consciousness and glowing mind,  
No longer vague, but fully now defined,  
The latest gift of Time. In that fair land  
They ruled the tribes and nations of mankind,  
Subject to their dominion and command,  
And fed the seasons mild with intercession bland.

XVI.

Forthwith, fulfilled their reign, in strength declined  
 High-vaulted Uranus and his huge bride ;  
 Like phantoms pale in air and wave they pined,  
 By nature's life absorbed, wherewith allied  
 Their essence shone. By all things now denied,  
 Depleted by each day and passing hour,  
 Their own approaching doom they prophesied,  
 And heard around their throne wild tempests lower,  
 While struggling to retain reality and power.

XVII.

Then Kronos, strongest of the Titan brood,  
 When with swift flight the destined hour had  
     flown,  
 By Fate ordained and not to be withstood,  
 With hand unfilial grasped the starry crown  
 Of his dread sire, and hurled him from his throne  
 High-reared in space ; shattered the monarch lay,  
 His lost dominion yielding with a groan :  
 The stars fell reeling in that mad affray,  
 And shrouded wept the earth dim-eyed with pale  
     dismay.

## XVIII.

But in Olympus Kronos sat sublime,  
Omnipotent, in dread supremacy ;  
His right hand grasped the sceptre old of Time,  
His footstool was the Book of Destiny,  
That sealed and sanctioned his authority ;  
O'er which with searching gaze he oft would pore,  
Seeking therein the solemn mystery  
Of Nature's life more fully to explore ;  
And learn his powerful realm to found for evermore.

## XIX.

Dawned thus, in splendour dawned, a reign divine ;  
O'erjoyed the god threw down shield, spear and  
lance ;  
Blazing in victory with front benign ;  
The sorrowing earth at his awakening glance  
Felt in her torpid veins the young blood dance,  
And clothed with verdure rich her meadows bare,  
Enkindled by his beaming countenance ;  
Ripe fields and golden harvests waving fair,  
Kronos well pleased beheld her happiness declare.

XX.

Nearest his throne stood Themis, calm and grave,  
 And Rhea his bride, though with averted eyes,  
 For still she yearned her offspring bright to save,  
 And sought she too the secret to surprise,  
 Whose potent spell the world and vaulted skies  
 Had grandly reared ; that e'en the Fates compelled ;  
 And rendered gods and men through insight wise :  
 With viewless ministers discourse she held,  
 And in her own deep breast her purpose strong withheld.

XXI.

Then to his mighty brethren, wise and fair,  
 The bulwarks strong of his majestic reign,  
 Dominion o'er the earth and sea and air  
 He meted out ; to each his broad domain ;  
 Thus binding them his glory to sustain  
 Inviolatè. By their great king controlled,  
 Their sceptres they received, of honour fain,  
 As shone in heaven each mystic name enscrolled,  
 While lightnings flashed and thunderbolts around  
 them rolled.

## XXII.

Kronos o'er all his undisputed power  
Retained ; and reared his palace in the sky ;  
Of bright Olympus the effulgent tower ;  
From whence unbounded space he could descry,  
All realms o'eraglancing from his turret high ;  
While palaces of gold were grouped around,  
Where dwelt his court ; each splendid deity  
Who thither came on tranquil service bound,  
Or at their monarch's feet in silence sat spell-bound.

## XXIII.

The ocean measureless then knew its lord,  
Girdled, and taught the trident to obey  
Of wise Oceanus. That name adored,  
Still heedful of his summons night and day,  
The billows echoed in their bounding play  
With reverence sweet. Of immemorial age,  
His art the pangs of sorrow could allay,  
And baffle Fate and vanquish Fortune's rage,  
The oldest of the gods, most reverend and sage.



## XXIV.

Sea-monsters frolicked in his stormful path,  
And mermaids hymned the glory of his reign,  
Disarming with sweet melody his wrath,  
Charming with song the unrelenting main ;  
He drove his chariot o'er the watery plain,  
And smoothed the billows of that emerald floor,  
Or, waking the fierce tempest's hoarse refrain,  
Bade winds and waves contend with wild uproar,  
And drown the shrieking ship wrecked on the jagged  
shore.

## XXV.

The wonder of the deep, his sapphire throne,  
In his rich palace 'neath the shimmering waves,  
Where homage he received, far-flashing shone ;  
Whence flowed the light whose azure radiance paves  
The crystal grotts and semiluent caves  
Of that dim world. Beside him pleasantly  
There Thetis quaffed the lore each spirit craves ;  
Soothed with soft sounds and lapping melody,  
With all the pomp engirt and splendour of the sea.

## XXVI.

Effulgent blazed amid those glorious ranks,  
Sublime Hyperion, the god of light ;  
To him perpetual incense breathed and thanks,  
And hymns of praise pursued his daring flight,  
From morn to eve ; when, in his chariot bright,  
The fiery steeds which he alone could guide,  
Pawing the azure vault, a dazzling sight,  
He drove at will, though hurricanes defied,  
E'en to the farthest bounds that day from night divide.

## XXVII.

When Eos with soft smile her torch illumed,  
No longer bound his ardour to restrain,  
That wingèd course each morn the god resumed ;  
Confronting the day's toil with calm disdain ;  
The roseate eastern mount he climbed again  
E'en to the zenith's throne ; nor there found rest ;  
But down the steep decline his fiery wain  
Impatient urged ; cloud-girt, still forward prest,  
And through the portals plunged far-flaming of the west.

## XXVIII.

On isles of light beyond, like ships of flame,  
That floating starred the sea of liquid space,  
His palace stood ; where Thea majestic came,  
Soft-footed as the eve, with tranquil grace,  
To meet the elemental god's embrace ;  
Who now from toil released, with his fair spouse,  
While solemn night the vault ruled in his place,  
Beheld fleet by the hours of soft repose ;  
Till summoned by the morn her portals to unclose.

## XXIX.

Thus order through the Titans was revealed,  
Thus their career magnificent achieved ;  
Giants and gods in every realm repealed—  
Not yet of their pre-eminence bereaved—  
Old violence, and ancient wrongs retrieved.  
New life and higher forms made quick the old ;  
Perfected laws from Kronos all received ;  
The gods reigned in Olympus free and bold,  
And man on earth enjoyed his happy age of gold.

## xxx.

And thus accomplished their momentous sway,  
Began in woe and darkness to appear  
Signs of defeat dissension and decay :  
Terrific presages and omens drear,  
Visions and pallid phantoms hovering near,  
With admonitions of their coming fall,  
The reigning deities perplexed with fear ;  
Each god of his own destiny the thrall ;  
Their disanointed ranks wild prophecies appal.

## xxxi.

E'en Kronos trembled in his halls of state :  
His aged eyes no longer could discern  
The awful secrets of the Book of Fate ;  
In vain the mystic pages he would turn,  
Seeking their dire significance to learn ;  
Care sat within his soul and sorrowful gloom,  
Never again with pleasures soft to yearn ;  
The air was thick with messages of doom,  
And in Olympian courts the silence of a tomb.

## XXXII.

And fully now when all things were fulfilled,  
Shone in the East the long-expected morn,  
In nature's veins fresh vigour was instilled,  
Prophetic of the promised day new-born,  
At whose clear advent fled the night forlorn,  
Speeding black-robed athwart the brightening blue :  
Horror and fear convulsed the age outworn,  
While Eros from his throne mysterious flew,  
And marked at his command evolved the order new.

---

## THE SIRENS.

### SONG FIRST.

#### I.

WELCOME, sweet Bard, Apollo's son entrancing,  
O'er the salt sea in sorrow doomed to roam,  
Granted no rest and to no goal advancing,  
Seeking for aye, and finding ne'er a home.

#### II.

On thy sweet lyre with swelling notes celestial,  
Smoothly discoursing high and mighty themes,  
Lost on the kings by fetters bound terrestrial,  
Empty delusions weary of and dreams.

III.

Welcome, fair Argonauts, heroes transcendent,  
Worn by the quest of honour and renown,  
Led by a false star banefully ascendent,  
Luring that rose and like a beacon shone.

IV.

Fame's golden fruit, by Hera bright protected,  
Boldly who sought and fearful foes subdued ;  
High then in hope, now hopeless and dejected,  
O'er weary seas by cruel Zeus pursued.

V.

Bard, unto thee they turn for consolation,  
But find it not in thy exacting art ;  
Much-needed rest and yearned-for renovation  
Craves the worn brain, desires the wounded heart.

VI.

Scourged by the Fates and by the Gods forsaken,  
Hear they amazed thy too submissive lyre ;  
Mocked and betrayed, how bitter to awaken,  
Galled by defeat and fretted by desire !

## VII.

We too are chilled by thy sublime narration,  
Soaring on high and plunging in the deep ;  
Phantoms evoking of the world's creation,  
Who, undisturbed, in darkness now should sleep.

## VIII.

Eros, dread god, we tremble at his mention,  
All things who stirs and quickens though unseen,  
All things who mars with endless intervention,  
In life and death unaltered and serene.

## IX.

Kronos usurped his ancient throne Titanic,  
Uranus smiting cruel and severe,  
Ruling stern-browed his gorgeous court tyrannic,  
Idols o'erthrown of ignorance and fear.

## X.

Worship of old they challenged and devotion,  
Sacrifice sweet received the mighty race,  
Never again the glow of warm emotion  
Now to arouse ; without a shrine or place.



XI.

Splendid their reign was in the past primeval  
Giants superb, colossal and sublime,  
Stars, new-illumed, with Chaos dim coeval,  
Shone they confessed the elder sons of Time.

XII.

But where is now the majesty so vaunted,  
Once that adorned their bright and proud array ?  
Strength unsurpassed and haughty grace undaunted ?  
Dulled by defeat and blighted by decay.

XIII.

Themis once fair, but shrouded now with sorrow,  
E'en stony hearts with pity moves and ruth ;  
Vanished the past—a day without a morrow—  
Glories and grace of her exalted youth.

XIV.

Rhea, Gea, Thea, spectral shapes distorted,  
Feebly bewail impersonal their fall ;  
Lovely they were, or so at least reported,  
Drop o'er their brows oblivion's decent pall.

## xv.

Hoary Oceanus, though wise reputed,  
Mourns in sea-caves neglected his decline ;  
Ay, the whole brood from heavenly heights uprooted,  
Obsolete types, in dull subjection pine.

## xvi.

Him, e'en, their boast, the radiant god Hyperion,  
Once so revered, advancing time decried,  
Far too august for tender love's criterion,  
Justly o'erthrown, rejected and denied.

## xvii.

Wherefore recall, sweet minstrel, their endeavour,  
Gilding with praise a long forgotten sway ?  
Ah, from the past thy soul too soaring sever,  
Sing as it woos thee each enchanting day.

## xviii.

Dreamer, lose not reality in vision,  
Wake not thy lyre unheeded and in vain ;  
Life ever is ; no subject of derision ;  
Quaff then the cup that foams with joy and pain.

XIX.

We who behold thee marvel at thy beauty,  
Speeding in light and splendour from afar,  
Ever and aye our homage claim and duty,  
Famed in all lands, our hope and rising star.

XX.

Hear then our prayer, and let us, Bard, implore thee,  
'Wildered too long, ah, trust in our advice,  
For thine own sake we fondly who adore thee,  
Seek now from death and madness to entice.

XXI.

Mock not the Argonauts, ah, gentle Thracian,  
Fanning their hopes of victory and Greece ;  
Pity instead their weakness and prostration,  
Lead them, their guide, to happiness and peace.

XXII.

Mark and behold their languor and distraction,  
See how it palls thy song's seraphic flow ;  
Lo, for they feel a more divine attraction,  
Love in each breast beginneth now to glow.

## XXIII.

That ardent flame with thy new song enkindle,  
That glowing spark fan softly and enhance,  
Quenched and outshone thy triumphs old will dwindle,  
As flee the stars at morning the sun's glance.

## XXIV.

Ah, the sweet themes of our Elysian measure,  
Ah, the low notes that sense transmute to flame,  
Sweet and more sure the god-like gift of pleasure,  
Than idle toil in quest of bootless fame.

## XXV.

Pause then, O Bard, o'erwrought with love of glory,  
Speeding on mad quests o'er the stormy main,  
Chanting with loud voice of the ages hoary,  
Vaunting in high hymns misery and pain.

## XXVI.

Hither, O haste, and from our lips delighted,  
Learn the sweet cadence murmured by these waves ;  
Bliss unalloyed and happy love requited ;  
Learn thou the song that from delusion saves.

XXVII.

Come with thy lyre and bless the hearts that love  
thee,

Flee not the arms appealingly that woo,  
Soft zephyrs sigh, soft smiles the sky above thee,  
Lo, 'tis for thee, and not for us to woo.

XXVIII.

Ah, the white arms so tenderly entwining!

Ah, the swift pulse and yearning of the breast!  
Why wilt thou leave us weary and repining?  
Here peace awaits thee, rapture here and rest.

## THE VICTIMS OF THE SIRENS.

### SONG FIRST.

#### I.

LIKE dying zephyrs when they faint and fail,  
Our doleful monody,  
Unheard 'mid sweeter strains, a plaintive wail,  
Creeps sobbing o'er the sea.

#### II.

In sunless caverns 'neath the surging main,  
We mourn our thralldom drear ;  
Wasted with grief and ever-gnawing pain,  
Like dead leaves thin and sear.

III.

Thine eyes discern us not, O Bard divine,  
Nor dost thou hear our moan ;  
But we on Argo's prow behold thee shine,  
Like some god on his throne.

IV.

Each note we hear of thy celestial strain,  
And with new hope imbued,  
With quickened pulse and renovatèd brain,  
Feel now our strength renewed.

V.

How pleasant, Orpheus, are thy heavenly lays,  
How sweet thy cheering voice,  
Chanting old legends of the early days,  
Bidding our hearts rejoice.

VI.

Borne backward on the pinions of thy song,  
As on a dove's white breast,  
Forgetting our own pain and grief and wrong,  
We seem at last to rest.

## VII.

Wild beasts and savage with thy golden lyre,  
Thou, Minstrel sweet, hast tamed ;  
Beneath the sea, oh, wilt thou now inspire  
Souls stricken and defamed ?

## VIII.

The rocks have moved at thy command and  
Stones thou hast made to feel, [mountains,  
O, wilt thou now at last the frozen fountains  
Of our sad hearts unseal ?

## IX.

Refreshing tears, not bitter as of old,  
Burst from our tear-worn eyes,  
The ice-shroud of our spirit, stiff and cold,  
Seems melting in our sighs.

## X.

Break iron chains, at last O let us speak ;  
Give utterance to our pain ;  
Too long repressed, our grief a vent must seek,  
Let it not be in vain.



XI.

We too were heroes in the happy past,  
Undaunted, true and brave,  
In our good ships, though shrieked the stormy blast,  
We ploughed the furrowed wave.

XII.

'Mid distant lands 'twas our high lot to roam,  
Where great deeds we achieved,  
And precious cargoes bore to our loved home,  
By fortune ne'er bereaved.

XIII.

'Till we approached these famed and famous isles,  
Where the dread Sirens dwell ;  
The golden land that with enchantment smiles,  
Though at the gates of hell ;

XIV.

Until we saw the white swan throats upreared,  
And silver-glancing feet,  
Of those foul fiends who angels bright appeared,  
We dreamt not of deceit ;

## XV.

Until entranced, the low melodious tones  
We heard with failing breath—  
The sighing supplications, wistful moans,  
That drew us down to death.

## XVI.

Then coursed within our veins ethereal flame,  
Low bent the dazzling skies,  
And goddesses we saw, who went and came ;  
Lo, fire was in our eyes !

## XVII.

Seemed e'en the waves, all tremulous with song,  
To woo us and implore ;  
No more to be restrained, we plunged headlong,  
And gained the deadly shore.

## XVIII.

Gained all too soon, and yet, alas, too late,  
With eager strength unspent,  
That fatal goal ;—gained it to learn our fate,  
And frenzy wild lament.

XIX.

Sped like a dream of bliss the promised day,  
When horrified, appalled,  
We woke to find ourselves of fiends the prey,  
Lost souls, snared and enthralled.

XX.

They bound us darkly in the sombre deep,  
In noisome dungeons dank,  
Where with perpetual moan salt showers we weep,  
Feeding the sea-growths rank.

XXI.

But ah, from those dim sepulchres uplifted,  
Less poignant seems our woe,  
The burden from our weary breast is drifted,  
Our sad tears cease to flow.

XXII.

We rise, we cleave the waves, O hallowed hour !  
From death redeemed and pain ;  
Drawn upward, Minstrel, by thy heavenly power,  
Our freedom we regain.

## XXIII.

Hail, azure sky, and thou, O bounding ocean,  
Scarce ruffled by the wind !  
Hail, Argo, heaving with a pleasant motion,  
Hail, sweet face of mankind !

## XXIV.

Brave Argonauts, great heroes free and bold,  
Oh, shrink not from our gaze,  
Your stately forms with rapture we behold,  
Whom all the nations praise.

## XXV.

Receive us and embrace, immortal Thracian,  
Minstrel, beyond compare ;  
Lo ! thou hast come to end our long probation,  
Our new life to declare.

## THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS.

### SONG FIRST.

#### I

WHAT forms are these moaning  
That rise on the blast,  
Their sad dirge intoning  
With terror aghast ?

#### II.

Pale phantoms disparted,  
Updrawn through the wave,  
Woe-worn and faint-hearted,  
What seek ye or crave ?

## III.

With wild eyes appealing,  
To life lost and fame,  
Why come ye revealing  
To men's eyes your shame?

## IV.

With tears and complaining  
These kings would ye move?  
From heroes obtaining  
Protection and love?

## V.

From them the far-sailing  
Glad tidings receive,  
Your petulant wailing  
And grief to retrieve?

## VI.

Your kingdoms deserted  
Lo, would ye regain?  
With strength re-asserted  
Borne back o'er the main?

VII.

To homesteads forsaken  
Despatch loving word ?  
Dead love re-awaken  
With greetings deferred ?

VIII.

Sweet Orpheus enchanting,  
The Bard beyond praise,  
Would hear proudly vaunting  
The gods and their ways ?

IX.

Or mark with eyes darkling,  
The sunbeams at play  
With blue wavelets sparkling,  
Foam-tipped, in our bay ?

X.

Or come ye as lovers,  
Our love to beseech ?  
Outvying these rovers,  
With hoarse, raven screech ?

## XI.

In languor reclining,  
At ease on our strand,  
Our pleasure divining,  
Sweet lords of the land ;

## XII.

With smiles and caresses  
Our grace would ye woo ?  
Make free with our tresses ?  
With bold love subdue ?

## XIII.

Ah, traitors, ye tremble,  
Your courage has failed ;  
Seek not to dissemble ;  
Like insects impaled,

## XIV.

That flutter in anguish  
And perish forlorn,  
Ye wither and languish,  
Transfixed by our scorn.



*THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS. 37*

XV.

Denied and dejected,  
Sink back in the deep ;  
Back, slaves, life-rejected,  
In darkness to weep.

XVI.

What fond consolation  
Rewardeth your schemes,  
Who seek from probation  
To flee, as in dreams ?

XVII.

Sweet liberty seeking,  
Sweet nature's kind face,  
No vigils now keeping  
Of doom and disgrace ?

XVIII.

Your doom find augmented  
And grief from this hour,  
Your fetters cemented,  
Diminished your power !

## XIX.

Strange anguish and yearning  
Shall feed your salt tears ;  
In hot hearts hell burning,  
There quakings and fears.

## XX.

Go parley, if dreaming  
Of tidings and news,  
With sea-fowl wild-screaming,  
And savage sea-mews.

## XXI.

Hear from them of commotion,  
Death-shriekings and groans,  
Of wrecks on the ocean,  
And dead men's bleached bones.

## XXII.

Debased and depleted,  
Approach not our isles,  
Your sad stare defeated  
Our splendour defiles.

*THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS.* 39

XXIII.

Dead passions re-clothing,  
The past ye accuse,  
Hence, avaunt, our sick loathing,  
Too long ye abuse !

XXIV.

Our love and devotion  
In hatred expired ;  
A fleeting emotion,  
In vain now desired.

XXV.

By fortune's consenting  
Foredoomed to decay ;  
Through fate unrelenting  
The flower of a day.

XXVI.

A fervour far-seeing  
Born only to die,  
E'en pity now fleeing,  
Has breathed her last sigh.

## XXVII.

Our life's full completeness  
Is due to the strong ;  
For heroes our sweetness  
We guard, and our song.

## XXVIII.

Pale spectres, soul-emptied,  
For you life is o'er ;  
From pardon exempted,  
Hope not ;—nevermore.

## XXIX.

Hence, hounds ! no compassion !  
Flee, dogs, or await,  
Aroused to wild passion,  
The scourge of our hate !

## THE ARGONAUTS.

### SONG FIRST.

#### I.

HEROES renowned, we bade farewell to Greece,  
Called by the sacred gods to our high quest,  
Forsaking at their bidding joy and peace  
For days of toil and nights of fierce unrest ;  
We heard in Argo swift the billows roar,  
And sailed undaunted from our native shore.

#### II.

Hera, the queen of heaven, our enterprise  
Enjoined, whose image blazes on our prow ;  
To her, down-bending from the golden skies,  
Libations deep we poured with many a vow ;  
Then through the billows rushed with shout and  
cheer,  
All dangers to confront without a fear.

## III.

Young Hylas on the Mysian shore we left,  
Betrayed, when scarce our voyage had begun,  
Of freedom sweet by water-nymphs bereft ;  
And Heracles, of Zeus the mighty son,  
Who like an eagle mourning for his mate,  
Bewailed that youth beloved, disconsolate.

## IV.

Pheneus old, the prophet we released,  
Accursed and tortured by the Harpy-brood ;  
The wretched king who sat at each day's feast  
With hunger gnawed ; untasted that rich food ;  
Of Boreas bold the bright and daring seed,  
The Harpies quelled, and that sad monarch freed.

## V.

Safe through the grinding rocks, Symplegades,  
Swift as an arrow's flight we dauntless sped,  
The first strong ship that stemmed those stormy seas,  
A crew like ghostly Charon's, pale with dread ;  
Lo ! great Athene held them with her arm,  
And shielded us with her bright smile from harm.

## VI.

Then as we turned, still trembling with affright,  
Behold, a wonder met our startled view,  
For motionless they stood, a portal bright,  
Betwixt the bending heavens and waters blue ;  
A gateway of the ocean deep and wide,  
Through which a fleet henceforth might safely glide.

## VII.

Colchis we reached at last, our journey's end,  
And saw well tended, in his house of gold,  
Æetes wise ; but found in him no friend ;  
With crafty speech, in treachery grown old,  
Jason he sought in his own toils to snare ;  
Like some strong lion strangled in his lair.

## VIII.

Terrific tasks, to win his soul's desire,  
He bade the hero dare, or that forego ;  
Yoke must he straight the fierce bulls snorting fire,  
Hephæstos' gift ; the field of Mars must sow,  
And reap a fearful harvest ; men of might,  
Born but to slay or to be slain in fight.

## IX.

A sleepless dragon, too, guarded the fell,  
Him to devour who those great deeds had dared,  
A beast hell-charmed, proof against sword and  
spell,  
Who watchful in the brazen temple glared  
Where hung our prize ; the sentinel of death,  
Not to be quelled by one of mortal breath.

## X.

But Jason, by the gods with strength imbued,  
And by the sorceress served, Medea wise,  
Whom Aphrodite for his sake subdued,  
Æetes mocked, and carried off the prize ;  
In Argo we bestowed the treasure bright,  
And furtively set sail at dead of night.

## XI.

Pursued Æetes in his ship amain,  
Medea cursing, who, thief-like, had fled,  
Him robbing of the wonder of his reign,  
The sacred fleece ; swift through the waves we sped,  
Still doubtful of the issue, winged with fear,  
Although triumphant, with no shout of cheer.



## XII.

We saw the bounding ocean gleam afar,  
But at the harbour's mouth Absyrtus rushed  
To stay our passage, breathing haughty war ;  
Then whirlwind-like his galley strong we crushed,  
And to detain the king, deaf to remorse,  
Fed the red waves with his son's mangled corse.

## XIII.

Accomplished now our great quest we believed,  
Too soon from that delusion to awake,  
And find ourselves, how bitterly deceived,  
By heaven enjoined, for slain Absyrtus' sake,  
New toils to brave and sorrows undergo,  
Our victory's reward, danger and woe.

## XIV.

The wretched thralls of unrelenting fate,  
And by the Father-god whom all obey,  
Our crime red-handed doomed to expiate,  
Helpless we drifted now by night and day,  
Far from our homeward journey driven forth  
By wrathful Zeus, east, west, and south and north.

## XV.

A northern stream, e'en as the gods foretold,  
We entered first, a river dark and slow,  
That bore us cheerless to a region cold,  
A land of desolation, ice, and snow,  
Where savage beasts and savage tribes we met,  
Dwelling ice-bound, by perils dire beset.

## XVI.

And happier then, the broad and sinuous Nile,  
Snake-like, in its meandering course we traced ;  
'Mid tropic fields where golden harvests smile,  
And feathery palms, high-yearning, heaven-embraced :  
We saw the temples of that wondrous clime,  
And quaffed at living founts old lore sublime.

## XVII.

From whence into the sea that laps the world,  
The outer ocean's deep circumfluous stream,  
Safe we emerged ; there our worn sail unfurled ;  
And saw strange sights in those strange waters gleam :  
Hesperian gardens in the purple West  
With their rich fruit, and Islands of the Blest.

## XVIII.

To Circe's realm, by bright-winged Iris led,  
Great Hera's messenger, we smoothly steered,  
Beheld the goddess of enchantments dread,  
And her sad court, men who but beasts appeared ;  
Lo, there Medea's fratricidal heart,  
Deep-dyed, was purified by Circe's art.

## XIX.

Thus wandering still, by fate pursued and crost,  
By dangers new and woes each hour assailed,  
In caves entrapt ; on wide seas tempest tost ;  
Where homeless winds, our sole companions, wailed ;  
Strong still at heart, stern fortune we defied,  
Her blows confronting with heroic pride.

## XX.

But in this smiling sea we sink, we fail,  
Our god-like mind with languid gloom o'ercast,  
Crouching with vacant stare like phantoms pale,  
From whom slips by the unremembered past ;  
Defeated now and bitter seems our quest,  
We sigh for peace alone, peace, peace and rest.

## XXI.

With strange enchantment yon bright islands  
gleam,

There jewelled palaces far-flashing shine,  
And lovely forms, star-like, sweet as a dream,  
Half-veiled in golden mist, look forth divine ;  
And beckon us and woo with sighing breath,  
Songs sweet as love and terrible as death.

## XXII.

Master and Bard, awake again thy lyre,  
Chant of the holy gods, and with thy song  
Our strength renew ; our faith, O re-inspire ;  
With rapture thrilled, o'er sorrow, fear and wrong,  
Upborne ethereal by thy wingèd strain,  
To that pure realm where the Immortals reign.

## ORPHEUS.

### SONG SECOND.

#### I.

AID me again, Apollo sweet, my sire,  
Responding not in vain to their appeal,  
The fainting Argonauts to re-inspire :  
Ere utter palsy o'er their senses steal—  
In mine own chilling veins too well I feel  
That creeping death—thy presence bright declare,  
Guarding in peril now our endless weal ;  
Strength give me, god, to grant their heart-wrung  
prayer,  
And with my wingèd song their languid souls upbear.

## II.

Thou, too, O Father Zeus, my cry attend :  
Permit not, radiant monarch of the skies,  
Our sad defeat ; O thou, the heroes' friend ;  
From fatal death, hidden in fair disguise,  
Our souls release ; our gallant enterprise  
Do thou sustain ; shield us for Hera's sake,  
And read our supplication in her eyes :  
Until on Grecian soil our bread we break,  
And in each sacred shrine of thy high feasts partake.

## III.

Sink not, fair Argonauts, ye heroes brave,  
Girded each soul for mighty deeds prepare,  
Seize now the sinewy oar ; the yielding wave  
Cleave with strong strokes, fleeing the subtle snare  
That vainly lures ; to me the gods declare  
Their gracious will ; swift speed the shining throng,  
And bid us boldly venture, grandly dare ;  
Secure brave hearts in their protection strong,  
And quickened by the breath of my immortal song.

IV.

Granted the sacred voice divine to hear,  
 Will ye by artful strains be led astray,  
 And lures contemptible? O'erwrought with fear,  
 Of base deceit the unresisting prey,  
 O, will ye now your freedom sweet betray,  
 And life forego? Nay, in your bitter need,  
 As moonbeams mild tumultuous tides allay,  
 Let my strong faith with your wild madness plead ;  
 Hark to the monitor that biddeth us god-speed.

V.

Hear ye the happy tale I wait to tell :  
 The woes forgetting of the ancient line  
 Who, doomed and vanquished, from Olympus fell,  
 My lyre attend while for the gods divine,  
 Who in the court of Zeus resplendent shine,  
 Whom we ourselves with reverence deep obey,  
 Their mighty heirs, a song-wreath I entwine ;  
 Who when the Titans fled the starry way,  
 From ruin's night evolved a new and brighter day.

## VI.

All things those splendid deities control ;  
They live, they reign, immutable, sublime,  
Peoples and nations leading to their goal :  
But hearken ye, o'erjoyed, my powerful rhyme,  
Their glory vaunt in that remoter time  
That saw established their dominion proud ;  
Exhausted by fierce wars in heaven's bright clime,  
When 'neath their blows the reeling Titans bowed,  
The younger race, and with authority endowed.

## VII.

Through pain and anguish life divine is born ;  
Through hard contention gained serene repose,  
When now the ancient dynasty out-worn  
Declined, fierce strife and præternatural throes,  
Travail and incommunicable woes,  
Nature convulsed ; warfare 'twixt sire and son  
The gates of hell commanded to uncloze,  
And fiends empowered their baneful course to run ;  
Until immortal Zeus had gained his destined crown.



VIII.

Omnipotent, he then began his reign,  
 High-seated in the vaulted firmament ;  
 That had not yet outwept the frequent stain  
 Of thunderous clouds with stormy splendours blent  
 Pealing on high ; the earth was torn and rent ;  
 But 'neath his smile prolific harvests sprang,  
 Those wounds to heal with lovely wonderment ;  
 Once more the morning stars glad pæans rang,  
 As, when bright Uranus fell, a new song nature sang.

IX.

In terror thus and splendid state enthroned,  
 The god supreme, whom none might now withstand,  
 Eros ordained ; his great brow lightnings crowned,  
 And eagles, golden-winged, flew from his hand  
 Tempestuously ; awaiting his command ;  
 The ægis flared on his victorious breast,  
 And his far-seeing eye o'er sea and land  
 Looked forth. O joy ! the hour had come of rest ;  
 In pomp the setting sun sank in the burnished west.

## X.

Effulgent in her beauty's dazzling blaze,  
And glittering sheen, a presence mind-illumed,  
Like roseate vapours quaffing the sun's rays,  
That quivered with excess of light consumed,  
Hera, the queen of heaven, her place assumed  
Nearest his throne. Supreme in grace and pride,  
In her fair form all rich perfections bloomed ;  
Of the Omnipotent the destined bride,  
She who with haughty scorn e'en awful Zeus defied.

## XI.

Rang in Olympian courts high revelry,  
Rejoicings for each sumptuous hour devised ;  
Hymnings were heard and songs of victory ;  
New laws were framed and statutes old revised ;  
And Zeus his sacred wedding solemnised  
With joy ineffable. Swift Hymen flew  
Those rites to bless ; all nature sympathised ;  
Unveiling her clear vault of cloudless blue,  
O'er which the bridge of love Iris enchanted threw.

XII.

Lo, in the realms of day what bliss was rife,  
 Where now with proud security elate,  
 Accomplished the appointed years of strife,  
 Kronion's court, sanctioned by time and fate,  
 Assembled to confirm and celebrate  
 Their victory. Peace in each heaving breast,  
 The pomp and splendour of their new estate  
 Enraptured they surveyed ; at last carest  
 By fortune's favouring smile, and with dominion blest.

XIII.

Splendid Olympus glowed ; the mansions bright  
 Of those glad deities beatified,  
 Quivered with lustres strange ; a wondrous light,  
 By azure fount and violet urn supplied,  
 With supernatural gleam the zenith dyed ;  
 Where banners waved and floating draperies  
 Fluttered unfurled ; e'en man on earth espied  
 Faint glimpses of those moving pageantries,  
 Processions marching forth and armies in the skies.

## XIV.

Omniscient Zeus then with his brethren shared  
The kingdoms bright above and realms below  
Which to possess they too had greatly dared ;  
Poseidon first, the ocean in its flow,  
Fields furrowed which no husbandman doth sow,  
Obtained—his proud domain ; the surging wave  
Whose balmy dews refresh all things that grow ;  
Prosperity to powerful states he gave,  
And taught the mariner his white-winged fleet to save.

## XV.

Hades, stern Aïdoneus then received,  
In that partition vast ; the realm of gloom  
Where phantoms pale of happy life bereaved,  
Buried their form substantial in the tomb,  
On earth of human souls the speeding doom,  
Their sad estate bewail. Deep in the earth,  
Mother of all created things and womb,  
From heaven afar and scenes of festive mirth,  
The forces he evolved that stir the spring's new birth.

## XVI.

In countless groups, invincible and fair,  
Bright gods and goddesses of every grade,  
The streams inhabiting and sky and air—  
What strength and beauty in their ranks displayed!—  
Their offspring bright, all nature's kingdoms swayed,  
And on the earth supernal tasks performed,  
O'erruling subject man. Zeus all obeyed,  
And on his throne celestial, prayer-bestormed,  
With life that starry throng the Father-god informed.

## XVII.

Great heroes, too, full many a stately line,  
Princes and bards who heaven's effulgence caught,  
Tracing their lineage to a source divine,  
On earth appeared. In every land besought,  
Fierce wars they waged, and to perfection brought,  
With grace divine and majesty endowed,  
Each lofty enterprise with danger fraught ;  
While at their feet awe-struck the peoples bowed,  
The power acknowledging by their great birth bestowed.

## XVIII.

O heroes brave, e'en such is your descent,  
Ethereal ichor flows within your veins,  
The same rich streams, with pure ambrosia blent,  
That feed the gods ; whose strength divine ne'er  
                  waned,  
Whose shields of light no envious blemish stains,  
Your proud progenitors. Thus high in fame,  
Who then of his unhappy fate complains ?  
Branded with infamy, for aye, and shame,  
His glorious heritage, O, who will now defame ?

## XIX.

Of those young gods, when first their course began,  
And all creation glowing with delight,  
With praise rejubilant and welcome rang,  
Attentive hear ; when, beautiful and bright,  
To war with evil and defend the right,  
They rose effulgent in the dawn of time,  
Star-like. Dishonoured now in their pure sight,  
Sink not in this foul bay's detested slime,  
But emulate their deeds, as glorious and sublime.

XX.

Supernal god, of fair Latona sprung  
 And awful Zeus, the holy arts of peace,  
 With heavenly speech to which enchantment clung,  
 Old sorrows that subdued and bade them cease,  
 Apollo taught. Then first in happy Greece,  
 His altars pure were reared in many a shrine,  
 And hearts oppressed through him obtained release ;  
 His dawning worship was esteemed divine,  
 And witnessed by the god with miracle and sign.

XXI.

In grace and beauty, he, magnificent,  
 The elder gods in all their pomp outshone ;  
 When his great bow terrificall he bent,  
 And his keen arrows to their aim had flown,  
 Applauded Zeus on his cerulean throne.  
 Delphi he sought, and slew the beast abhorred  
 Whose presence fell had caused that land to groan,  
 And founded there his oracle adored,  
 When purged of every ill sweet peace had been restored.

## XXII.

The flaming chariot of the orbèd sun,  
Now Helios urged, to that proud throne assigned ;  
The haughty heir of fallen Hyperion ;  
But walked Apollo 'mid distressed mankind  
His woes to heal and bleeding wounds to bind :  
From herb and flower he medicines doth distil,  
And balsams pure that cheer the drooping mind,  
And renovate the frame outworn and ill ;  
His hand the cup of life with sparkling health doth fill.

## XXIII.

The Muses rapt, dwelling in sweet accord,  
Wooded by the bard, who for their favour pleads,  
With worship pure, their guide avowed and lord,  
His steps attend. O'er sunny heights he leads  
His votive train, and dew-bespangled meads,  
By his bright presence drawn and beaming glance,  
And to each sybil fond her prayer concedes ;  
Wild hymns they chant, and tread the mystic dance  
And Musagetes praise in ecstasy and trance.



XXIV.

On Phœbus bright the gift of prophecy  
 His sire conferred, and all supernal lore,  
 Taught by the goddess sweet, Mnemosyne :  
 Him not in vain pale worshippers adore,  
 And throng his shrines the priestess to implore,  
 Whom the dread god with fury doth inspire ;  
 From her wild lips shrieks incoherent pour,  
 For in her breast she feels the wildering fire,  
 And hears afar the notes of sweet Apollo's lyre.

XXV.

That sacred instrument, by Hermes wrought,  
 Apollo, ravished, from his hand received,  
 A gift divine, long pondered on and sought,  
 With which all woes henceforward he retrieved,  
 And sighing sorrow of her tears bereaved ;  
 When first his hand the golden chords o'erswept,  
 Himself in their resources ne'er deceived,  
 All knew that music till that hour had slept,  
 And in Olympian courts the gods supernal wept.

## XXVI.

With trophies rich the Graces strew his path ;  
A light from heaven enhaloes his fair brow ;  
Evil he treads upon, slain by his wrath,  
But virtues 'neath his smile prolific grow,  
And bounteous blessings from his footsteps flow  
In living streams. No creature doth he scorn,  
But cheers the veriest wretch and soothes his woe :  
Flees from his kindling glance the night outworn ;  
His kingdom is the soul ; his presence there the morn.

## XXVII.

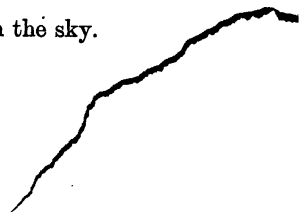
Fair Artemis, his sister, goddess chaste,  
Apollo's soul and lofty nature shares ;  
A huntress free, she loves the desert waste,  
Pursues the fleeing stag, nor foeman spares,  
With sacrilegious heart who reckless dares,  
Irreverent, her solitudes invade :  
Her vengeance, thus insulted, she declares,  
And when in her secluded haunts waylaid,  
Abandons to his doom the sad wretch self-betrayed.

XXVIII.

Actæon thus, the hunter young and fair,  
 Though once the comrade of the archer-queen,  
 Chosen her sports and bold pursuits to share,  
 Her wrath incurred. Close in a thicket green,  
 Flecked by the shadows of that leafy screen,  
 The majesty he saw, inviolate,  
 That god nor man with bold glance might demean ;  
 Stricken with awe he fled, but ah, too late !—  
 His own fierce hounds pursued and dragged him to his  
 fate.

XXIX.

Selènè sweet, low-hovering, her fond beams,  
 O'er young Endymion in his pampered sleep,  
 By love-sick visions tended and soft dreams,  
 Enamoured shed ; she with soft dews would steep  
 His poppièd couch, and crystal sorrows weep,  
 All dolorous in her crescent barque on high :  
 Languished the night's fair queen with passion deep,  
 Nor for her human lover ceased to sigh,  
 Till by her side enthroned she crowned him in the sky.



## xxx.

More sternly fashioned, tameless, proud and bold,  
Imperious Artemis with marble heart,  
And breast impenetrable, calm and cold,  
Wielding herself the death-inflicting dart,  
Disdains of Cupid's idle shafts the smart ;  
From Zeus her sire claiming immunity  
From wanton joys, that languid ease impart ;  
Preferring to love's pleasures liberty ;  
For ever young and fair, majestic and free.

## xxxi.

The solemn forests know her glancing form,  
The mountain tops and shadow-haunted glades,  
The night, black-winged, and thunder-pealing  
storm ;  
With her sweet-nymphs she roams and goddess-  
maids,  
Tireless, 'mid glimmering swords and dusky shades,  
Or sports with laughter sweet in fount and stream,  
Whose cool refreshment to delight persuades ;  
Chaste, lustrous limbs in crystal fountains gleam,  
At tranquil noon and 'neath the soft moon's silvery beam.

XXXII.

With every virtue graced, severe yet mild,  
 Pallas, beneficent, her gracious reign  
 In heaven began. Of Zeus the favoured child,  
 She, thought-evolved, from his omniscient brain,  
 With thunders rent and lightning throes of pain,  
 Herself unruffled as a morn serene,  
 Irradiate sprang, flawless and without stain ;  
 A prodigy until that hour unseen ;  
 Flashed in the halls on high her armour's glittering  
 sheen.

XXXIII.

By Zeus himself her radiant brow was crowned,  
 With him she dwells in freedom unconfined,  
 Or speeds abroad on splendid missions bound,  
 The schemes to execute of that veiled mind,  
 Inscrutable, by her alone divined.  
 No mask for Pallas bright the conqueror wears.  
 Nor seeks her azure eye undimmed to blind  
 But 'neath her argent gaze his purpose bears,  
 The child of wisdom she his secret counsel shares.

## XXXIV.

In many cities stand her stately shrines,  
Where with full pomp her worship is confest ;  
But 'mid them all to Athens she assigns,  
Proud learning's seat, through her protection blest,  
Supremacy. Honoured and served with zest,  
In that fair town the goddess reigns in state,  
In benefits and good deeds manifest ;  
Oppressive laws she there doth abrogate,  
Annulling by her power the harsh decrees of fate.

## XXXV.

Orestes thus she hastened to defend,  
When by the Furies fearfully pursued,  
Avengers stern, no rest he found nor friend ;  
Until at great Athene's shrine he sued,  
Stained by the foul reproach of kindred blood,  
And justice at that dread tribunal claimed,  
And judgment true. Curbing the hellish brood,  
She then from their fierce fangs the prince  
reclaimed,  
And laws more merciful throughout all Greece  
proclaimed.

XXXVI.

But when incensed, wrathful and fierce with ire,  
 She seeks with headlong flight the battle-field,  
 Ruin to wreak and heroes re-inspire,  
 Her terrors supernatural are revealed ;  
 Blazes upon her breast the Thunderer's shield,  
 And waves her hand aloft the massive spear  
 Which she alone terrifical can wield ;  
 When they behold her fiery crest appear,  
 Whole armies routed flee, stricken with panic fear.

XXXVII.

'Mid scenes of devastation, woe and strife,  
 And in the council chamber, where words kill,  
 When loud debate is heard, with rancour rife,  
 Ruling the tempest wild, through force or skill,  
 With triumph flushed she comes, guarded from ill,  
 To strengthen and uphold the righteous cause,  
 And force mankind heaven's mandates to fulfil ;  
 And that achieved, she bids the hero pause,  
 Sweet peace establishing, ordaining holy laws.

## XXXVIII.

Not violence she loves for its own sake,  
Strife she engendereth not in idle sport,  
Like Ares fierce, of carnage to partake ;  
But calm she comes with higher wisdom fraught,  
The brave to shield, and ill deeds bring to nought.  
The sword of justice wields her powerful hand,  
With victory her standard proud is wrought,  
She goeth forth sublime from land to land,  
Order is in her smile and in her word command.

## XXXIX.

Fair Aphrodite in the courts above  
With gentle grace assumes a lowlier seat ;  
Of beauty the eternal queen and love,  
She languishes e'en at the Father's feet,  
With zone unbound, intolerably sweet ;  
The splendour of the sea is in her eyes,  
Passion in her deep heart and pulse's beat ;  
Feed tender Cupids on her amorous sighs,  
And in her balmy breath float wordless melodies.



XL.

She from the foam-tipped waves immortal sprang,  
 Anigh Cythera, that balm-breathing shore,  
 While with glad welcome the wide welkin rang,  
 And with a thrill divine ne'er felt before,  
 The gods bent down from heaven's star-patined floor  
 The fair new-born divinity to greet ;  
 The laughing waves her tender form upbore,  
 Lapping with furtive glee her silver feet,  
 Sighing submissively with murmurs low and sweet.

XLI.

Sublime she stood in radiant majesty,  
 Beneath a bending vault of cloudless blue,  
 'Mid splendours wafted forth and melody :  
 The bounding billows winged with rapture flew,  
 As o'er its gleaming path swift dolphins drew  
 Her pearl-enwrought and gem-encrusted car ;  
 Resounding anthems choral zephyrs blew,  
 And mermaids sped to worship from afar  
 Her roseate limbs joy-flushed, and throbbing like a star.

## XLII.

Kindled at her soft smile the bending skies,  
And quivered 'neath her feet the golden spray ;  
The ocean rocked, deep-heaving with surprise,  
And rose Poseidon on the watery way,  
In haughty pomp, acknowledging her sway ;  
Enamoured winds the blooming isle carest,  
That gem-like smiled in that enchanted bay ;  
And tremors strange stirred in each human breast,  
A troubled yearning vague, and nameless sweet unrest.

## XLIII.

Thus Cytherea mild began her reign :  
Fair, fresh, and fragrant, from the foaming sea,  
The ever-flowing, fluctuating main,  
Nature's deep fountain of virginity ;  
Her sceptre bright of soft authority  
Thus seized she in life's dawn. With sumptuous  
    grace,  
Beaming with beauty and benignity,  
In pure perfection peerless smiled the face,  
Which sorrow could not mar nor conquering time deface.

## XLIV.

Portents and signs accompanied her birth,  
Electric pulses thrilled the lambent air,  
And blushed with tropic bloom the fruitful earth ;  
White doves and roseate Cupids debonair,  
With gems enwreathed and fragrant garlands rare,  
Sped at her call, their queen supernal. Hist,  
They cling and nestle in her floating hair,  
And tremulous with passion, as they list,  
Those gleaming locks of gold with fawning rapture kist.

## XLV.

Wafted by that bright troop to heaven she rose,  
By all the gods embraced, with loud acclaim,  
Who marked with awe the petals soft unclosed  
Of that sea-flower, rose-tipped, and pure as flame ;  
And blessings to her worship clung and name,  
For gods and men attained from that sweet hour  
A nobler life and more enduring fame,  
Etherealized ; to passion roused and power ;  
The gift of sacred love and Aphrodite's dower.

## XLVI.

Cupid, by fate impelled, with his keen dart,  
Her wayward son, imperious and blind,  
With his fierce plaything sports, the wounded heart,  
Delighting in the torments of mankind ;  
His proud dominion o'er the passive mind  
Vaunting with cruel joy. But when possess,ed,  
By the dread godhead roused as by a wind,  
Eros himself glows in his awful breast ;  
In him revealed pure deity shines manifest.

## XLVII.

In each low whisper then the god is heard,  
Divinity is in his cloudless glance,  
Authority supreme in his least word,  
And life and death in his dread countenance ;  
His subjects at his bidding straight advance  
Unawed, knowing that fate is in his call ;  
His deeds, as motes upon a current dance,  
Dominions, states, and dynasties enthral,  
Whirling at his command to their predestined fall.

XLVIII.

Then in the tempest peace is his and calm ;  
 With shrouded death he walks devoid of fear ;  
 Rain heavenly blessings from his outstretched  
     palm ;  
 His beaming smile consumes the falling tear ;  
 Howe'er disguised divine he doth appear ;  
 Sad Psyche, worn and pale, his eye discerns,  
 The wished-for prize of many a weary year,  
 To her impetuous his spirit yearns,  
 He wins his radiant bride and to high heaven returns.

XLIX.

Thus reigned triumphant in the dawn of time,  
 In ages marvellous, remote and grey,  
 Where hovering floats my backward-fleeing rhyme,  
 When laughed creation with spring's flowerets gay,  
 Then first enthroned, in that far-distant day,  
 Zeus and his splendid court ; the glorious throng  
 Who still maintain their universal sway,  
 In vigorous youth, majestic and strong ;  
 The happy theme for aye of my heaven-soaring song.

## L.

Thus still they reign, the gods of radiant birth,  
Performing each the part by fate assigned ;  
Ruling in unison the heavens and earth.  
Fierce Boreas stormful rides the shrieking wind ;  
The gentle Graces their bright wreaths enwind ;  
Demeter bountiful o'er fields presides  
Where cheerful reapers golden harvests bind ;  
And Hestia mild to happy homesteads glides,  
Where fostered by her smile sweet harmony abides.

## LI.

Great Hera nuptial vows doth consecrate :  
In glancing groups the ever-whirling Hours  
Of time the robe dissolving fabricate :  
Sweet Hebe nectar pours in heavenly bowers,  
While Ares, with dark frown forbidding lowers ;  
Hephæstos labours at his forge's fire ;  
And Hermes good or ill on earth empowers ;  
While wrath in every breast, revenge and ire,  
Phœbus Apollo soothes with his celestial lyre.

III.

Supreme o'er all, that splendid government  
 Dread Zeus sustains, with countenance of light,  
 Enthroned and secret in the firmament.  
 In emulous succession day and night  
 Pursue beneath his gaze their rhythmic flight ;  
 The speeding years their mysteries unfold ;  
 To him the ancient stars, serene and bright,  
 The anthem chaunt once heard by Kronos old,  
 And wandering winds intone the future's song untold.

## THE SIRENS.

### SONG SECOND.

#### I.

Lo, 'tis the hour ; the coruscating ocean  
    Basking reflects of noon the gorgeous blaze ;  
Argo, white-winged, with soft and bird-like motion,  
    Wins on the shore, attracted by our gaze.

#### II.

Lo, 'tis the hour ; let peace reign and relenting,  
    Sailors, well-skilled, seize now the eager oar ;  
Amorous winds, love-languid, sigh consenting,  
    Glistens the tide that laps our gleaming shore.



III.

Many fair ships have sailed this bay enchanted,  
Mariners oft have hearkened to our song ;  
But ne'er a crew so stately and undaunted,  
Charmed has our view, godlike and fair and strong.

IV.

Heroes and kings superb beyond believing,  
Long have we known your deeds of high emprise,  
Ah, leave us not, the golden hour bereaving,  
Gather the fruit entinctured by these skies.

V.

Lo, in each life some moment comes all-vital,  
Which if 'tis seized eternity is won,  
Which if 'tis lost, that loss finds no requital,  
Leaving accursed a forfeit soul undone.

VI.

Thus heroes brave occasion now invites you,  
Prescient with power, ethereal with bliss,  
Thrilling each breast strange fervour hence incites  
you,  
Lose not your goal ; the hour of fate is this.

## VII.

Theseus, fair youth in life's sweet dawn effulgent,<sup>1</sup>  
Come undismayed high fortune here to meet,  
Castor and Pollux, Leda's twins refulgent,  
Offspring of Zeus, we welcome you and greet.

## VIII.

Telemon bold, by Phœbus served, Admetus,  
Arcas, O haste, the smiling billows spurn ;  
Cleaving the waves, like gods come to entreat us,  
Godlike each breast impassioned now doth yearn.

## IX.

Zêtês, Kalaïs, lovely twins of Boreas,  
Butes o'erwrought with ecstasy and pain,  
Erginus bright, on battle-fields victorious,  
Argonauts all, your guerdon here attain.

## X.

Joys beyond joy, transcending all expression,  
Wait to reward ye, exquisite, intense ;  
Wake from your dream of languor and depression,  
Flee the dead past of anguish and suspense.

XI.

Praises apart sweet Orpheus the Immortals,  
Sceptred who sit in splendid state on high,  
Long may we see their iridescent portals  
Curtained with flame, far-flashing in the sky.

XII.

Serve we their shrines as custom bids and fashion,  
Lo, 'tis enough and fully should suffice ;  
Worship no god with ardour blind and passion,  
Yield not the heart a living sacrifice.

XIII.

They in their pomp are proud of our alliance,  
Fleeing Olympus hither oft they wend ;  
Nor do they come to vex us with defiance,  
But welcome guests whom we in need befriend.

XIV.

Zeus, high o'er all, the mighty Ægis-bearer,  
Ever to us with favour is inclined,  
Lo, well he knows in loveliness no rarer  
Heaven's goddess-train at banquets rich reclined.

## XV.

Hermes full oft on this shore has alighted,  
    Speeding to earth with crafty schemes elate,  
Here the sea-king Poseidon walks delighted,  
    Pleased with the gems that sparkle at his gate.

## XVI.

Ares the fierce, and much maligned Hephæstos,  
    Rest seek from toil in this Elysian clime,  
When the hushed sea soft zephyrs of the west toss,  
    Soothed by our song and soft recurrent rhyme.

## XVII.

Hera our friend is, she the queen resplendent,  
    Spouse of the king, enthronèd by his side,  
E'en the world's empress on our aid dependent,  
    Oft in perplexity has hither hied.

## XVIII.

Ay, Musagetes, haughty-souled Apollo,  
    He whom the Muses flatter and obey,  
Tread in his steps obsequious and follow,  
    These lovely isles has marked with calm survey.

XIX.

For well they know, the gods by fate permitted,  
Ruling on high, that we our part perform,  
Weave we our thread where nought may be remitted,  
Weave nature's web of sunshine, shade, and storm.

XX.

Pallas alone, by watchful Zeus protected,  
Deem we our foe and tremble at her state,  
Blazing sunlike with wisdom's smile reflected,  
Serves she her sire with scornful pride elate.

XXI.

Awful his child with clangour who horrific,  
Rent, thunder-girt, the all-conceiving brain ;  
Pallas we dread, her aspect is terrific,  
Born of the throes that taught Omniscience pain.

XXII.

When meteor-like, from far Olympus darting,  
Comes she in wrath with stern, forbidding glance,  
Flee we appalled, from gorgeous feasts upstarting,  
Loathe to confront her frown and dreaded lance.

## XXIII.

Love's lovely queen more fair is and beguiling,  
Sweet Aphrodite, blossom of the sea,  
She the foam-flower, in bloom and beauty smiling,  
Wave-born who sprang from strife the soul to free.

## XXIV.

Gracious and mild, the gleaming swan of splendour,  
Goddess divine, whom gods and men adore,  
We too, her thralls, at glowing altars send her,  
Sweet, secret gifts from this enchanted shore.

## XXV.

But far more fair are we than Aphrodite,  
Grant it, pale crew, suspended on our lee,  
Why do ye fear, ye, stalwart thus and mighty,  
Beings so mild, why seek our isles to flee ?

## XXVI.

Heed, cruel Bard, and pity our complaining,  
Silence thy lyre, loud-shrieking, for our sake,  
See our sweet bloom with sorrow sad is waning,  
Come, Orpheus bright, our raptures to partake.

XXVII.

O'er thee we float a vision soft, ideal,  
    Thrill thee and rouse, selected from the throng,  
Fade now and flee thy fantasies unreal ;  
    Swayed by our breath awaken we thy song.

XXVIII.

Swift the brave kings who hearken and obey thee,  
    Lead to the goal by every heart desired ;  
Ah, well thou know'st, they tremble to gainsay thee,  
    Loved by the gods, by Phœbus bright inspired.

XXIX.

Sweet are the songs o'er land and sea resounding,  
    Heed them and speed song-wafted to our shore ;  
Here to abide in joy and peace abounding,  
    Kings here to reign—yea, gods for evermore.

## THE VICTIMS OF THE SIRENS.

### SONG SECOND.

#### I.

THE quick seed buried in the earth's dark bed  
Is conscious of the sun ;  
Softly it swells, with heat and moisture fed,  
And knows its life begun.

#### II.

At deepest midnight, when the bright stars yearn,  
A new strange hope is born ;  
The tide of darkness then begins to turn,  
With promise of the morn.



III.

The very dead corrupting in the tomb  
Are vital in decay ;  
On thick-sown graves sweet flowers most richly  
bloom,  
And deck the brow of day.

IV.

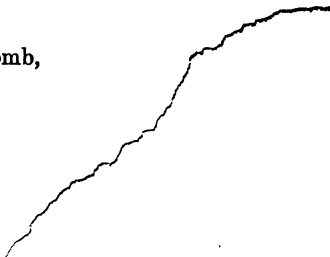
Still Minstrel sweet we hear thy piercing song,  
But heed not its appeal ;  
Too crushed by sorrow, too oppress'd by wrong,  
Too dead again to feel.

V.

No hopes, no dreams henceforth in our sad heart,  
Like fragrant flowers, will spring,  
No new desire, like callow bird upstart,  
With faint and fluttering wing.

VI.

Our night no morning now will ere illume,  
Nor ebb our sea of woe,  
Nor life from death be born in this sad tomb,  
Nor good from evil flow.



## VII.

The storm has passed, awakened by thy lyre,  
That shook erewhile our breast ;  
To aspiration roused, stirred by desire,  
We sink again unblest.

## VIII.


The voices shrill of our tormentors fierce  
Have palsied soul and sense,  
We tremble 'neath their cries and mocking curse,  
Wailing with grief intense.

## IX.

Their adjurations o'er our spirit sweep  
And quivering nerves laid bare,  
As wintry tempests through a forest leap,  
Stript of its blossoms fair.

## X.

Their dreadful glance pursues us and their hate,  
O, wretched men forlorn !  
We cannot conquer death nor strive with fate,  
We perish 'neath their scorn.



XI.

These caverns dank, so long our living graves,  
Our sepulchre will be,  
Here shall we sleep, rocked by the restless waves,  
Unshriven, in the sea.

XII.

And yet, O Orpheus, while thy voice divine  
Rings in the outer air,  
In blank despondency we will not pine,  
Nor utterly despair.

XIII.

Though now to follow thee we prove too weak,  
Our sorrows bear in mind,  
Our ransom, Bard, from Zeus the father seek,  
Bid him our chains unbind.

XIV.

Ah, faithfully the gods we ever served,  
Failed not their meed of praise,  
We loved them well, and well of them deserved,  
On earth, in happier days.

## XV.

Pallas her faultless hecatombs received,  
And Aphrodite sweet ;  
Apollo's holy shrines were ne'er bereaved  
Of votive offerings meet.

## XVI.

Oh, plead for us, fair Minstrel, warmly plead,  
Our intercessor mild ;  
Inform the gods of our heart-rending need,  
Hear us, Apollo's child.

## XVII.

At great Athene's shrine report our cause,  
To her bring our complaint,  
That goddess wise perchance the cruel laws  
Will ease 'neath which we faint.

## XVIII.

Dread Zeus in his eternal state implore  
Some present help to lend,  
His messenger to this unhappy shore,  
Entreat the god to send.

XIX.

Let Hermes, winged with lightnings, clothed with  
power,  
Or Heracles his son,  
Proclaim e'en here—O speed the glorious hour !—  
A victory new won.

XX.

Or let the Far-Destroyer bend his bow,  
Respecting thy appeal,  
The Sirens with his shafts of light lay low,  
And their decrees repeal.

XXI.

More savage than wild beasts, dead than mere stones,  
For these thy lyre can move,  
Leave not beneath the sea our whitened bones  
To mock the sacred Love,

XXII.

O'er heaven and earth immutable who reigns,  
Unseen in awful state,  
To whom no living soul in vain complains,  
Stronger than time or fate.

## XXIII.

No, leave us not, of gods and men the scorn,  
In this unhallowed bay ;  
Woe worth the hour when we sad slaves were born,  
Cursed be for aye that day.

## XXIV.

Sweet Orpheus, leave us not, our last hope fled,  
To perish thus alone ;  
Uncharnelled ghosts, more wretched than the dead ;—  
Hear, gracious Bard, our moan.

## XXV.

Great Zeus, omnipotent, stretch forth thy hand,  
Save us, O Father, save !  
Moved thou by our despair, O give command,  
Uplift us from the grave.

## THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS.

### SONG SECOND.

#### I.

HOUNDS, bloodless back-hunted  
To sorrow's domain,  
By darkness confronted,  
Eternal, and pain ;

#### II.

What, still are ye dreaming  
Of rescue and love,  
Your anguish redeeming,  
Sent down from above ?

## III.

Still deem ye your moaning  
These heroes will heed,  
And, roused by your droning,  
Respond to your need ?

## IV.

That Orpheus unhandsome,  
Sublime with his lyre,  
Demand will your ransom  
From Phœbus his sire ?

## V.

From gods your exemption  
From just doom obtain,  
And through your redemption  
Dishonour our reign ?

## VI.

That Zeus with his thunder  
Will lean from the skies,  
With pity and wonder  
To bid you arise ?



*THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS* 93

VII.

Send Heracles hither,  
Or Hermes so bright,  
Our beauty to wither,  
And kingdom to blight ?

VIII.

That Phœbus, far-darting,  
His dread bow will bend,  
At your call upstarting  
Swift succour to send ?

IX.

That Pallas, unyielding,  
Your cause will espouse,  
And come, lightnings wielding,  
To hearken your vows ?

X.

Ye, vanquished by pleasure,  
Our victims and slaves,  
'Gainst whom, without measure,  
Her wild fury raves ?

## XI.

The thralls of illusions;  
That rise from these shores,  
Deceits and delusions  
That most she abhors ?

## XII.

Poor fools, self-deceiving,  
That aspect severe,  
Unmoved by your grieving,  
Unchecked by your fear,

## XIII.

Would blast ye and shatter,  
Disperse and consume,  
As earth-quakings scatter  
Dead bones in a tomb.

## XIV.

The Argonauts splendid  
Heed not your complaint,  
They leave you unfriended  
To languish and faint.

XV.

Your plea they resist not,  
Nor harshly deny ;  
For them ye exist not,  
They hear not your cry.

XVI.

By gods and men banished,  
In vain now besought,  
Forgotten, evanished,  
Ye are, yet are nought.

XVII.

As living men feasting  
Heed Charon's pale crew,  
Dull Lethe's tide breasting,  
With myrrh crowned and yew ;

XVIII.

As hurricanes sweeping  
Take note of the sheaves  
From reapers torn reaping,  
Or forest-stript leaves

## XIX.

As firmaments boundless  
Attend the assault  
Of thin vapours soundless  
That creep o'er the vault

## XX.

Or oceans unresting  
The wisp of salt spray,  
An instant waves breasting,  
Then dying away ;

## XXI.

So heed these bold rangers  
Your heart-stricken prayer,  
Your sorrows and dangers,  
Defeat and despair.

## XXII.

They hear not forth-panted  
Your sad, plaintive screech,  
By terrors undaunted,  
They know not your speech.

*THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS. 97*

XXIII.

They saw not uprising  
Your pale forms appear,  
A vision surprising,  
Like ghosts thin and sear.

XXIV.

Those spectral forms wasted,  
Once ruddy and bold,  
By time and grief blasted,  
We only behold.

XXV.

Your voices' thin treble,  
Once hearty with cheer,  
That pipes faint and feeble,  
We only now hear.

XXVI.

Peace, then, nor distract us  
In this splendid hour ;  
The joys that attract us  
Our spells claim and power.

## XXVII.

Brave sailors to madden,  
Bold lovers to woo,  
A while feast and gladden,  
Then blight and undo :

## XXVIII.

The ever-sweet duty  
That lures and invites,  
Unveiled now our beauty,  
Revealed our delights.

## XXIX.

Gleam, ocean, and glisten  
A wide sea of calm,  
Hark, zephyrs soft, listen,  
Breathe music and balm.

## XXX.

Let no sound disturbing  
Our rapture be heard,  
No motion perturbing,  
No ill-advised word.

**THE SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS. 99**

**XXXI.**

Your sorrows restraining,  
Crouch, slaves, and beware ;  
No more loud complaining,  
No cries of despair.

**XXXII.**

Obey, discontented !  
Shriek not 'neath the wave,  
Weep low, souls tormented,  
Weep, mutter and rave.

## THE ARGONAUTS.

### SONG SECOND.

#### I.

VAIN is our toil, bound to the restless oar ;  
The languid zephyr, faint with noontide, fails,  
A current strong and swift sets to the shore,  
And, while we idly trim our homeward sails,  
Bears Argo thither with resistless swirl,  
Like some small craft caught in the Mälstrom's  
whirl.

#### II.

Why wrestle thus with our appointed fate ?  
Why shrink from visiting this heavenly land,  
Where bliss invites ; of pleasures to partake,  
And rest long needed by our weary band ;  
Ere homeward bound we tempt again the deep,  
Leaving fond hearts to wail for us and weep ?



## III.

'Tis not for heroes like ourselves to fear,  
Dreading like common men sweet Beauty's snare,  
Fleeing when dangers in our path appear ;  
We, monarchs, who the weight of kingdoms bear,  
Immortal in our lineage and descent,  
Long tried, and by stern Fortune's blows unbent.

## IV.

Long have we sailed the deep and treacherous  
main,  
Yet when from Danger's visage e'er have fled ?  
When sought to 'scape predestined joy or pain,  
The soft embrace of Love or monster dread ?  
Nor have we failed despite pursuing woes,  
And thronging griefs, to quell at last our foes.

## V.

In fated Lemnos blazed the lurid sky,  
And fires of hell in every household burned,  
When to that isle of horror we drew nigh,  
And saw amazed women to furies turned ;  
That which they most had loved taught to abhor,  
Dabbling their hearths defiled with kindred gore.

## VI.

Calm lay their agèd sires in slumber cold,  
Slain by those cruel hands ; as sadly fared  
Husbands in manhood's prime, and brothers bold,  
And sons in downy youth ; not one they spared ;  
Like fiends their fleeing victims they pursue,  
By Até roused, all wretched men they slew.

## VII.

Despite the flying rumours blown about,  
And fearful scenes that met our loathing sight,  
Where'er we gazed ; the Bacchanalian rout,  
And glare of homesteads blazing in the night,  
On that fear-haunted shore we dared to land,  
Where no man grasped in ours a brother's hand.

## VIII.

Those women-furies raving wild we tamed,  
And happy months in Lemnos then beguiled,  
With feast and song ; for soft delights once famed,  
And which again 'neath our dominion smiled.  
Swift sped the days with ease and pleasure fraught,  
'Till thence we sailed and fresh adventures sought.

## IX.

But left fair pledges of our love and grace,  
That wasted land repeopling with our seed ;  
The godlike offspring of a nobler race  
Than those dead men by Fate condemned to bleed ;  
Hypsipyle, the queen, two fair sons bred,  
For Jason's joy, ere o'er the sea we sped.

## X.

What mariners who ventured have to pause  
In Circe's realm, have 'scaped despiteful harm ?  
Fearful, with shaggy hides and hoofs and claws—  
Thus changed through Sorcery's insidious charm—  
All save ourselves in her dark wood have pined,  
From man's estate to savage beasts declined.

## XI.

Yet we protected—by the gods preserved,  
Her gem-wrought palace floor undaunted trod ;  
The cup we quaffed for deities reserved,  
And saw the servile train tamed by her rod ;  
Amid mankind, Odysseus, he alone,  
Thus free has stood and fearless by her throne.

## XII.

In forests of the north rude men unkempt  
And women wild our brave band have assailed,  
And worms hell-spawned ; and yet from fear exempt,  
To blanch our brows those rude assaults have failed ;  
From each new test victorious have we come,  
Shielded by heavenly grace, though doomed to roam.

## XIII.

In Egypt wisdom high and deep we sought,  
In temples knelt stupendous and vast shrines,  
Trembling ; there solemn mysteries were taught,  
That oft the neophyte to death consigns ;  
Isis unveiled in visions we beheld,  
By thirst of knowledge and great awe impelled.

## XIV.

Then wherefore from these isles enchanting flee,  
Where love awaits the kingly brow to crown ?  
Go forth with aching hearts the barren sea  
Restless to plough, when Pleasure's fields full-blown  
To rich delights invite and soft repose ?  
The sirens sweet why spurn like deadly foes ?

## XV.

We ask not in dull bondage to remain,  
Soon back we'll speed well satisfied to Greece,  
There in our native land to dwell and reign,  
Honoured by all ; there will we bring the fleece ;  
But let us here a happy season rest,  
Forget in this soft clime our weary quest.

## XVI.

Our lineage we defame, nor godlike show,  
Fair goddesses in leaving thus to yearn ;  
Their fruit enticing if we now forego,  
In our remorseful souls henceforth will burn  
The fires of hell ; ne'er, ne'er could we forget  
That here, unused, our sun of joy had set.

## XVII.

The bright Olympians seek these heavenly isles,  
Here pause and wander in delightful ease ;  
The feast that wreathes lips nectar-fed with smiles  
Shall we disdain ?—stubborn and hard to please !—  
What cause in soft enchantments for alarm  
That subjugate our glorious sires and charm ?

## XVIII.

Ah, vainly have we suffered, hoped and feared,  
If now we lose of all our toils the prize,  
Condemned to pass this placid bay uncheered,  
Bereaved of rest beneath these tranquil skies;  
How on our forfeit thrones assume command,  
Bearing no tidings back of this rare land?

## XIX.

The gods enjoined us, they, to undertake  
Our lonely wanderings o'er the bitter wave,  
And hence, in peril's hour, for their own sake,  
They guard us still; Hera resplendent saves;  
And here no less, if danger here exists,  
Saved shall we be;—what power their power resists?

## XX.

Basking beneath the blue noon's sapphire blaze,  
Soft as a maiden's breast, the ocean gleams;  
The sun's bright smile that o'er its surface plays,  
Like some celestial river shoreward streams,  
O'er which, with speed that our weak will derides,  
Pinioned by mighty love, swift Argo glides.

## XXI.

O Minstrel, pause, and cast aside thy lyre ;  
Thy prelude drowns the subtle siren songs  
That kindle in our breast ethereal fire ;  
Old memories sad of bitter griefs and wrongs  
Thence banishing ; that voice let us obey,  
Steeped in soft dreams for many a summer's day.

## XXII.

Resist no more ; some god our course directs,  
No zephyr stirs, yet onward still we speed ;  
The smile of heaven itself the wave reflects,  
And madness in our veins begins to breed ;  
Here is our journey's end, e'en here our goal,  
Here rest and peace engulfing sense and soul.

## ORPHEUS.

### SONG THIRD.

#### I.

STRENGTHEN, O god of light, my wavering hand,  
Phœbus, ineffable, my spirit's lord !  
Imbue my faltering accents with command,  
And with authority endow each word,  
Torn from my bleeding breast. Bright One adored,  
Hither, lest all my labour prove in vain ;  
Lest these doomed sailors in the pit abhorred  
Sink, desolate, and perish in their pain ;  
Lest their unruly course no longer I restrain.



II.

Forsake me not forlorn ;—nearer approach,  
 For dire has grown my need. With foaming crest,  
 As ocean tides on shipwrecked men encroach,  
 Where lies their barque by savage rocks distrest,  
 O'er Reason pale dethroned, with fierce unrest—  
 See how they glare on me with fiery eyes—  
 Upheaving wildly in each tortured breast,  
 Break Passion's waves. What counsel new devise ?  
 Hope from my sinking soul with shriek discordant flies.

III.

Immortal vigour for one glorious hour,  
 Grant, gracious guide, your fainting instrument ;  
 With grace divine and superhuman power  
 Swift succour from exhaustless sources sent,  
 O, thrill me now ! Let my desire be blent,  
 Zeus, Hera, Pallas, ye my patrons all,  
 With your command supernal and intent,  
 Sustained in my great aim. Heeding my call,  
 Permit not doubt or fear my sad soul to appal.

## IV.

Of what, pale mariners, is your complaint ?  
Regret ye now, to hardships long inured,  
The arduous past of conflict, woe, and want,  
Man's mournful heritage, too well assured,  
By souls heroical bravely endured,  
As by yourselves 'till this sad hour ? Undone,  
From your appointed path, by fiends allured,  
Will ye in weakness turn ? So nearly won,  
The daring race forego by heaven's commandment run ?

## V.

Hear from my mournful lips of change and grief :  
The plaintive song ; of time and circumstance,  
By conquering which in gradual years or brief,  
All living souls grow upward and advance, \*  
Strength gaining through each danger and  
mischance  
Victoriously opposed ; by sorrows fed ;  
Ennobled on the battle-field of chance ;  
As seeds are nourished in the earth's dark bed,  
Till from the feeble sprout a lordly oak is bred.

## VI.

Lo, e'en the gods on high from misery  
Are not exempt ; a heavy load they bear ;  
The burden of supreme authority,  
Crowned not alone with pomp, but thorny care,  
Forced like mankind their own will to forbear,  
At duty's call, and glory vindicate  
By victory o'er passion and despair ;  
By Love constrained in their ethereal state,  
The viewless One whose ministers are Law and Fate.

## VII.

In bright Olympian halls, with splendour crowned,  
All nature ruling, bounteous, free and bold,  
By Eros dread their haughty ranks are bound,  
Through law revealed ; his mandates they uphold,  
And mark his wondrous acts in time unfold,  
Awe-struck ; and all are by afflictions tried ;  
As in the crucible the perfect gold  
Of leaden dross is cleansed and purified,  
Through sorrow win the gods rapture beatified.

## VIII.

Kronion e'en, o'er heaven and earth supreme,  
Of his omnipotence the limit knows,  
Beholding o'er his throne resplendent gleam  
The Love Eterne from whence his being flows,  
Obedience who exacts and life bestows ;  
The course he cannot change of night or day,  
Nor grant the soul by sin defiled repose,  
Nor sorrows by the Fates ordained allay,  
Nor quench one throbbing star sown in the Milky Way.

## IX.

His countenance unveiled sunlike doth shine,  
From his clear glance flee evil things afraid,  
And yet while lesser souls in bondage pine,  
Sorrow and care that mighty breast invade ;  
With grief he marks immortal hopes betrayed  
In every age ; and when sweet hope has flown,  
And wretched souls their cruel fate upbraid,  
Saddened he hears on high their death-wrung groan ;  
Wound him the grief-winged prayers that seek in vain  
his throne.

## X.

Lo, then, will ye alone from sorrowing life  
Sorrow expel? the common doom avoid?  
The chequered world forsake of toil and strife,  
To dwell in isles of rapture unalloyed,  
Where languid Time, love-crowned and care-devoid,  
Seductive smiles? In fires that lurid glow,  
There would ye wake, like insects flame-destroyed,  
Condemned in that false clime to undergo  
A drear captivity of endless shame and woe.

## XI.

Forego, lost heroes, your delusive dream,  
From hell that sprang your feeble souls to slay,  
And drown beneath the ocean's chilling stream,  
Far from the cheerful sun and smiling day  
Subject for evermore to evil's sway.  
Awake, and once again let my high strain .  
The fever of your maddened souls allay,  
While now I chant sublime, with sad refrain,  
The sorrows of the gods and their majestic reign.

## XII.

Be guided, 'wilder'd crew. Ah, traitors, blush ;  
Who weakly thus from duty's path would turn  
At pleasure's call ; your wild delusions crush,  
And, watchful, from the bright Immortals learn  
Unfaltering to the steadfast light to yearn,  
Howe'er by woes assailed. Your plaintive cry,  
So shall they heed, and quench the fires that burn  
In each wild breast ; bend softly from on high,  
And strengthen ye forthwith these demons to defy.

## XIII.

With incense fed and praise in highest heaven,  
The monarch of the sky immortal reigns,  
Tended by soft delights from morn to even,  
With strength divine that waxes not nor wanes ;  
But where the wind on Caucasus complains  
Prometheus guards the knowledge of his fall,  
And unsubdued the monarch's wrath sustains ;  
Nor can his thunderbolts that breast appal,  
Nor thence the knowledge wrest that might his doom  
forestal.

XIV.

Prometheus, who the god supreme opposed,  
 Mocking Omnipotence to serve mankind,  
 Wronging the King of Heaven, and hence exposed  
 Through his own act to Fortune's blows unkind :  
 Who chose his bleeding brow with thorns to bind ;  
 Of Zeus himself the dread antithesis ;  
 Night of his day ; the sole unconquered mind  
 Who in his reign dares seek a chord amiss ;  
 His agony the foil of heaven's unclouded bliss

XV.

On Caucasus, the tempest-riven peak,  
 The Titan hangs in unremorseful pride,  
 Scorning from his great foe mercy to seek,  
 Whom he erewhile with subtle arts defied,  
 Teaching mankind his ruler to deride.  
 The vulture on his breast her hunger sates,  
 The barren rock beholds him crucified,  
 And yet with arrogance that nought abates,  
 His torment he endures and time's approval waits.

## XVI.

In heaven great Zeus looks forth with argent gaze,  
And marks the generations sink from view  
Like melting snowflakes or a dying blaze ;  
His living thought all nature doth imbue,  
And gives the march of time direction new,  
And yet in sorrow that pain-blasted form  
That from on high the spark ethereal drew,  
Must he behold ; Time destined to inform,  
Must hear his prophecy, re-echoing the storm.

## XVII.

Proud Heracles condemned he sees with wrath  
The heavy yoke to bear of servitude,  
Treading on earth a storm-beleaguered path ;  
And yet, by Fate enjoined, those labours rude,  
And harrowing woes that on his breast intrude,  
Dares not gainsay. With smothered grief and ire,  
His son beloved, with godlike strength imbued,  
He sees approaching the funereal pyre,  
From whence to heaven shall soar his spirit robed in  
fire.



XVIII.

Sweet Semele, by his warm smile illumed,  
 The human flower that slumbered on his breast,  
 In pure effulgence perished, light-consumed,  
 Though loved and by Omnipotence carest,  
 By Death betrayed ; despite his care opprest,  
 And to her woful doom subjected. Die  
 The heroes whom he loves, the brightest, best ;  
 To Hades dim their shadowy spectres fly,  
 While he bewails their loss, afflicted, in the sky.

XIX.

The gods afflict him with their frequent jars,  
 Dissensions fierce and stormy jealousies,  
 Injustice shown to man and sudden wars,  
 The peace endangering of the golden skies :  
 With soul perplexed, the schemes which they devise  
 He marks, and yet each sorrow must endure  
 On his high throne ; while Time swift-speeding flies,  
 The universal weal bound to ensure,  
 And from each passing wrong a higher good secure.

## XX.

By his own oath constrained, with bitter grief,  
Bright Helios yielded up the car of day  
To Phaethon fair ; proud of his triumph brief,  
And bent his utmost valour to essay ;  
But ah, the fiery coursers fled astray,  
Scorning the curb of that unpractised hand,  
Disdaining that weak guidance to obey ;  
Too rash he fell on fair Eridanus' strand,  
Lamented and bewailed throughout his native land.

## XXI.

Roaming with blazing front the light-veiled sky,  
All secrets of the earth and glassy wave,  
The sun-god strong and watchful doth espy ;  
Yet could he not his lovely offspring save  
From death untimely and a watery grave,  
By his own rashness doomed. With anguish wild,  
His chariot marred the stricken father drave,  
With blinding mists his radiant brow defiled,  
Shrouded his thunderous path with clouds like mountains  
piled.

## XXII.

Young Hyacinthus with his deadly disk  
Apollo slew ; the loved and lovely boy  
Whose cherished life he guarded from each risk.  
And yet was doomed unwitting to destroy,  
Smiting with his own hand his dainty joy ;  
From whose dead breast, flame-like, a purple flower,  
Born of the blood then spilled, without alloy,  
Immortal sprang ; sweet gift of that sad hour ;  
Filling with odorous breath full many a dusky bower.

## XXIII.

Ay, many woes bright Phœbus have beset ;  
Dangers and passions wild have oft waylaid,  
And sorrows, Argus-eyed, his path ; regret  
He, too, has known ; in mournful weeds arrayed,  
Remorseless fate his fond hopes has gainsayed,  
And broken with her heavy yoke his pride :  
So false Koronis his deep love betrayed,  
And his commands Cassandra pale denied,  
Who in despair henceforth her own doom prophesied.

## XXIV.

Daphne, she, too, eluded his fond grasp,  
His suit denying and impassioned prayer ;  
Nor could he that bright form enamoured clasp,  
Immeshed in laurel boughs the beauty rare,  
White arms outstretched and fluttered golden hair  
With ardent love pursued. Patient and wise,  
When from Olympus banished full of care,  
Served he in Thessaly in low disguise,  
Until by Zeus recalled in splendour to the skies.

## XXV.

Her lovely nymphs, by Cupid's arts allured,  
Forgives not Artemis, but soon forsakes,  
And with harsh punishment afflicts ; inured  
The impulses to quell that pity wakes  
Within the breast, when sorrowful doom o'ertakes  
The soul beloved. Sweet Daphne, hapless maid,  
Bound in a living tomb her sad moan makes, .  
And vainly the stern huntress doth upbraid,  
While freedom she awaits and rapture long delayed.

XXVI.

Kallistro beautiful, by Zeus beloved,  
 Forgetful of her vows was found forsworn,  
 And with her queen no more in friendship roved ;  
 A savage bear, grovelling beneath her scorn,  
 Of her own form afraid, she wept forlorn,  
 Till death from Hera's hand her bosom grazed,  
 To end her woes ; when lo, in heaven new-born,  
 Splendid in that once hateful shape she blazed,  
 And with her beaming stars the Love Eternal praised.

XXVII.

When fearfully assailed, Athens made moan,  
 By foes besieging to destruction brought,  
 Athene prostrate at her Father's throne,  
 Protection for her favoured site besought ;  
 Yet wept in vain with anguish wild o'erwrought.  
 No prayers nor supplications could avail  
 That ruin to avert. With fear distraught,  
 The pale Athenians in their ships set sail,  
 Their homes abandoning with wild and bitter wail.

## XXVIII.

Then on the shore deserted in dismay,  
On savage pillage bent, with sword and fire,  
The conquering legions rushed, like beasts of prey ;  
Temples and shrines from whence, with pure desire,  
Incense and praise had wont been to aspire,  
By ruthless hands were shattered and o'erthrown ;  
The statues of the gods, in ruin dire,  
Fell from their pedestals with vengeful groan ;  
With costly fragments rare the trembling earth was  
    strown.

## XXIX.

Gave then the goddess bright a glorious sign  
To that sad city to her soul endeared,  
Crushed and o'erwhelmed. Her olive-tree divine  
Down-hewn e'en to the root, that dead appeared,  
Her sacred gift, by friend and foe revered,  
A living shoot put forth ; the pledge of peace  
To the new Athens soon to be upreared,  
More splendid than the old ; with rich increase  
By great Athene blest, the capital of Greece.

XXX.

E'en Aphrodite, queen of love and mirth,  
 Wild fear and desolation oft has known ;  
 Condemned to wander weeping o'er the earth,  
 And her lost joys and dead delights bemoan,  
 Forsaken in her anguish and alone.  
 When sweet Adonis reckless once too oft,  
 And doomed upon the bleeding sward to groan,  
 The cruel boar ensanguined tossed aloft,  
 What frenzy wild convulsed the fair queen's bosom soft !

XXXI.

Dazed, to Olympus agonized she flew,  
 In her blanched car by frightened doves upborne ;  
 Staining in her wild course the mist-veiled blue  
 With vapoury sighs. Pallid with grief and worn,  
 Great Zeus she sought, of all her charms forlorn,  
 Nor ceased to wail and languish at his feet,  
 Till he, with awful nod, an oath had sworn,  
 Death of his costly prize erewhile to cheat,  
 And lost Adonis yield to her embracements sweet.

## XXXII.

Shrined in a secret grot, he slumbered long,  
Close sealed his azure eyes of liquid light ;  
But when the spring had filled the woods with song,  
When fields were green and growing blossoms bright,  
Stirred by the queen's soft breath—O happy sight !  
No longer now marble with cold disdain,  
All joyous he awoke from that dim night,  
And Aphrodite soothed of weary pain,  
Charming her yearning breast, of love and rapture fain.

## XXXIII.

Demeter, too, by cruel fate aggrieved,  
The bitterness of sorrowing life has proved,  
Of sweet Persephone her child bereaved.  
O'er land and sea the hapless mother roved  
Disconsolate, seeking the maid beloved,  
And seeking her in every land in vain ;  
The heavens and earth her supplications moved,  
Consumed with anguish and maternal pain,  
While wept Persephone in Hades—dark domain.



XXXIV.

Her secret doom no god might dare reveal,  
 No bird might whisper it with note of cheer,  
 No winds intone, nor rolling thunders peal ;  
 Until the Watcher of day's vaulted sphere,  
 Helios the strong, incapable of fear,  
 The dreaded truth with pity deep made known ;  
 Which when Demeter sad was forced to hear,  
 Dread vengeance she declared against heaven's  
     throne,  
 And sealed the fearful oath with many a heart-wrung  
     groan.

XXXV.

The barren earth her travail shared and woe,  
 Stricken with wintry death beneath her tread,  
 No longer now the ripening harvests grow ;  
 The blighted forests droop, withered and dead,  
 The streams are choked, by no fresh fountains fed ;  
 Till Zeus from Aidoneus claimed the bride,  
 With whose sad loss peace from the earth had fled,  
 And bade each spring to that sad mother's side  
 Bring back the maid beloved a season to abide.

## XXXVI.

Then once again the mournful goddess smiled,  
Her daughter bright reclasping to her breast,  
Of all her weary wanderings beguiled,  
And bitter grief, when by that hand carest,  
So long desired ; with full delight possess ;  
The lovely earth, no longer doomed to pine,  
Anew with rich fertility she blest,  
Bright grew the fields and bloomed the fruitful vine,  
While in Eleusis fair was reared her stately shrine.

## XXXVII.

But if on high the gods themselves are crost,  
By fate tormented, knowing grief and change,  
How mournful is man's lot ! He, tempest-tost,  
Allured by fantasy doth idly range  
Unsatisfied, pursuing fortunes strange ;  
In each new hope he finds a phantom wraith,  
Defeat and sorrows soon proud hearts estrange,  
He climbs the mountain slope with failing breath,  
And at the summit meets the chill embrace of death.

XXXVIII.

His span of life by fortune spun is brief ;  
 As sinks the ocean wave in its dark bed,  
 As flutters on the blast the withered leaf,  
 Like visions seen in sleep, too swiftly fled,  
 Appearing but to mingle with the dead,  
 He comes and goes. His foes are time and fate ;  
 Haunted by fiends he roams and phantoms dread,  
 Who with illusions mock his weak estate ;  
 From their dark power he flees, and wisdom learns too  
 late.

XXXIX.

On earth he weeps, and sheds more bitter tears  
 When Lethe he has crost. A ghost forlorn,  
 In that sad realm where perish hopes and fears  
 Of living men, though once a king, the scorn,  
 From pleasure and the radiant sunshine torn,  
 How sad is his lament ! Ah, woful doom !  
 Wandering in that dim night without a morn  
 His soul unhappy pines in lonely gloom,  
 While his once lordly shape rots in the noisome tomb.

## XL.

For many are the gods, but God is one,  
Still living and sublime as in the past,  
And that dread soul immutable, alone,  
In two forms manifest soars on the blast,  
O'erbrooding both as Love and Law time's waste ;  
Whence twofold are all semblances of life,  
Reflections by the central spirit cast,  
And in all realms are contradictions rife  
And sweetest harmonies ; hope linked with fear and  
peace with strife.

## XLI.

Life Psyche-winged fulfilment finds in death ;  
Responds to joy seraphic blighting pain,  
Congealed her roseate smile by sorrow's breath ;  
Harsh discords in sweet harmonies obtain,  
Swelling to fuller tone the perfect strain ;  
Time is the heart-beat of eternity ;  
Elysian pleasures palpitating reign  
Besieged by woes in whose embrace they die :  
The vacant tomb is donned by immortality.

XLII.

Alternate, day and darkness rule the vault,  
 The glorious sun uplifts his crown of rays  
 Dazzling, surrendered still at night's assault ;  
 Nor unrelated in Olympus blaze  
 With starry brows aglow and songs of praise,  
 The happy gods ; shrouded in dreadful gloom,  
 In their dim haunts and unrecorded ways,  
 The fiends of woe and hate fulfil their doom,  
 Enthroned in chaos wild and charneled in the tomb.

XLIII.

With incense fed and praise from morn to even,  
 In cloudless sunshine where serene they dwell,  
 Effulgent glow the shining lords of heaven ;  
 All nature searching evil things to quell,  
 Crying rejubilant that all is well  
 From throne to throne ; beneath them unallied,  
 Haunting the purlieus dim of lonely hell,  
 The deities infernal darkly glide,  
 Far from the light of day rejoicing to abide.

## XLIV.

The terrible Eumenides in wrath  
All unrebuked accomplish their career,  
Strewing with scattered lives their spectral path,  
Haunting the night of mind with shapes of fear ;  
Unmoved the fatal sisters weave and shear  
The thread of destiny : with baneful shriek  
And clangour wild the Harpies fierce appear,  
Insatiate of woe their victims seek,  
And on the cowering wretch unnatural vengeance wreak.

## XLV.

The dread Erinny's haggard with suspense  
Tribute accursed from sorrowing souls enforce ;  
Pale Nemesis with ruthless violence,  
Like some gaunt spectre feeding on a corse,  
Clings to the tortured mind sapped by remorse,  
From Tartarus obscure wild phantoms fare,  
And Ate speeds of furious ills the source ;  
The Sirens with their songs enchant the air,  
Until they seize their prey o'erwhelmed with black  
despair.

XLVI.

Yet is the power of evil circumscribed,  
 And sorrow still of joy the fruitful womb ;  
 Eros supreme cannot be swayed or bribed ;  
 Night flees ; the roseate morn he bids assume  
 Her golden throne, and her bright torch illume,  
 In whose clear flame all blissful spirits rove ;  
 Production springs prolific from the tomb ;  
 The raven shrieks, but soars the shining dove,  
 Bendeth o'er earth and hell a heaven of cloudless love.

## THE STRENS.

### SONG THIRD.

#### I.

FAIR is the land with beauty veiled alluring,  
Far from the world's vain tumult and uproar,  
'Neath the sea-sky, from age to age enduring,  
Where, love-enthralled, we tread the ocean's floor.

#### II.

Cities of gold in splendour there are gleaming,  
Palace and tower, fantastical and rare ;  
There lovers sport with loosened tresses streaming,  
Melodies sweet enchant the balmy air.



III.

Summer superb there regnant is for ever,  
Sea-blossoms bloom, how fragrant is their breath,  
Through the green billow-dome soft sunbeams waver  
Change in the sea comes not, nor dreaded death.

IV.

Time gently there speeds softly by unheeded,  
Frolic the hours in wild and wanton play,  
Weariness ne'er his azure flight impeded,  
Ages untold we count but as a day.

V.

There dwelleth Love, by vassals served adoring,  
Lutes and sweet song his glowing praise resound,  
Kneel at his shrines pale votaries imploring,  
Goddesses rapt endiademed and crowned.

VI.

Calm on his throne he sits in tranquil leisure,  
Poppies enwreath and lilies pale his brow,  
Clasps his fair hand the golden cup of pleasure,  
Founts at his feet and streams of nectar flow.

## VII.

Faint with delight, in grottoes dim and holy,  
Slumber dove-eyed he seeks and balmy rest,  
Softly reclined 'mid amaranth and moly,  
By floating dreams and dulcet strains carest.

## VIII.

Love who alone of life the shame redeemeth,  
As moonbeams mild tumultuous waves appease ;  
Joy from his glance and radiant presence streameth ;  
All that he does hath power to charm and please.

## IX.

Greeting the day new-born in pomp and splendour,  
Warm tremors thrill her palpitating frame,  
Soft then her smile, her dewy glance how tender,  
O'er him she bends with pulses swift of flame.

## X.

When on the night his pensive gaze he turneth,  
Blessings and sighs commingle with the dew,  
Pale on her throne she tremulously yearneth,  
Quiver the stars liquescent in the blue.

XI.

Love who subdues and sways the gods ethereal,  
Crowned in their midst in banquet hall and bower,  
He on man's brow who stamps his seal imperial  
Lifts from the dust and quickens for an hour.

XII.

In nature's veins he pleasures soft instilleth,  
Brighten the fields and blossom 'neath his tread,  
Each tender herb ambrosial dew distilleth,  
Balm on his path and wingèd odours shed.

XIII.

When his clear glance the ocean's frown erases,  
Gently it sighs with murmurous content,  
Lapping the shore with kisses and embraces,  
With the blue vault in mirror'd rapture blent.

XIV.

There in the ocean garnered are his treasures,  
There is beheld unveiled his chosen shrine,  
Come then, sweet kings, partaking of our pleasures,  
Quaff at Love's feet of life the ruddy wine.

## XV.

Let haughty Zeus in splendour reign above us,  
Guarding at bay his fate-beleaguered throne,  
Heed we alone the heroes brave who love us,  
Fame at our feet and glory who lay down.

## XVI.

Let the proud king amuse his lustful leisure,  
With eager goddess or enamoured queen,  
Let him incite great Hera's hot displeasure,  
Well he deserves her wrath and vengeful spleen.

## XVII.

Goddess alike, fair nymph and lovely mortal,  
Subtly deceived,—and, ah! at what a cost!  
Lured by his arts o'er sorrow's gloomy portal,  
Lured to despair,—fair fame and honour lost.

## XVIII.

Thus he transformed, in visions all prevailing,  
Io, sad maid—ah, shameful her disguise!  
O'er land and sea, her mournful fate bewailing,  
Roams she forlorn, pursued by Hera's spies.

XIX.

Semele sweet thus pampered was and flattered ;  
Bliss unalloyed who tasted in his arms,  
But to be slain, consumed, and thunder-shattered,  
When the false god had wearied of her charms.

XX.

Credulous thus fair Leda he entangled,  
Sporting white-limbed and laving in the stream,  
When, like a swan, while shone the wave bespangled,  
Fondled she Zeus amid her tresses' gleam.

XXI.

Scorn we the will ungodlike thus that wavers,  
Passions that fail and falter at the goal,  
Far be from us his blandishments and favours,  
Fixed in our course, unchanging as the pole.

XXII.

Let Hera fierce with jealousy ferocious,  
Kindle against her rivals heaven and earth,  
Scourged by her hand with punishments atrocious,  
Cursing the day unhappy of their birth.

## XXIII.

Zeus at her cry each lovely prize surrenders,  
Fearing her wrath and heedless of their woes,  
Monarch of craft, of traitors, and dissemblers,  
Fount of deceit, whence sorrow wells and flows.

## XXIV.

See the pale form on Caucasus suspended,  
Hear, vulture-torn, the wounded Titan's groan,  
He on whose aid heaven's king of old depended,  
Now by his hate and vengeful wrath o'erthrown.

## XXV.

Woe to thee, god, of pomp and power denuded,  
Quaffing in pain thy chalice of despair ;  
Ah, reckless crew, if now by dreams deluded,  
Doomed will ye be that sad defeat to share.

## XXVI.

Lo, are these gods to waken admiration,  
Justice who know not, gratitude nor grace ?  
Can they demand from mortals veneration,  
Who with their crimes dishonour nature's face ?

XXVII.

Ye heroes brave their promise hold and pledges,  
Yet were ye called high favoured to your quest,  
Lost in strange lands and wrecked on ocean ledge  
But to provide Kronion's court a jest.

XXVIII.

From kingdoms proud and happy homesteads riven,  
Hard 'tis to roam without a goal or friend,  
Mariners lost, o'er stormy oceans driven,  
On, ever on, to death—the bitter end.

XXIX.

Woe for your griefs and never-ending labours,  
Toiling by night and at the break of day,  
Clashing of swords and flashing forth of sabres,  
Foes to be met in battle's stern array.

XXX.

O, with full hearts lament we o'er your sorrows,  
Pity's soft dew is welling from our eyes,  
All the sad days and wretcheder to-morrows,  
Dangers and woes,—the future's grim surprise.

## XXXI.

Spurn then the gods, yourselves with scorn derided,  
Know them at last and from your dream awake,  
In these sweet isles a refuge is provided,  
Where the sad soul no sorrows can o'ertake.

## XXXII.

Here of dull time and death the chain is broken,  
Here from the worm on earth that crawls and dies,  
Glad Psyche springs, immortal by that token,  
Here man the gods in splendour far outvies.

## XXXIII.

They in the sky live tortured and tormenting,  
Ages storm-wracked their checkered state declare,  
In these sweet isles no voice is heard lamenting,  
Grief from our realm has banished been and care.

## XXXIV.

They from their thrones with horror are unseated,  
Peace in these isles eternal is and calm;  
Tartarus dim receives them when defeated,  
We dwell for aye with nectar fed and balm.



XXXV.

As in the firmament bright constellations  
Blaze forth in pomp and glory but to wane,  
So rise and set their passing generations ;  
Pleasure alone immutable doth reign.

XXXVI.

Linger not then, in doubt and fear delaying,  
Come roam with us beneath the ocean's dome,  
Pause not, sweet kings, your own fond hopes betraying,  
Here, in these isles, your kingdom find and home.

XXXVII.

Ah, the charm works, bright now each eye is gleaming,  
Now with a will ye seize the flashing oar,  
Victory winged o'er each proud crest is beaming,  
Come, we await expectant on the shore.

XXXVIII.

Orpheus heed not, Apollo's son, the Thracian,  
He 'tis who leads you, ay, and who misleads,  
Leads from delights to battle and probation,  
Sows in your souls of strife the bitter seeds.

## XXXIX.

Slave of the gods, by Phœbus bribed and flattered,  
Maddened he raves, with zeal phrenetic glows ;  
Seize ye his lyre, be rent the chords and shattered,  
Pealing on high, from whence his courage flows.

## XL.

Turn on him, heroes, lo, turn on him, rend him,  
Righteously so his doom decreed forestall,  
Seize the false heart, to Erebus straight send him,  
Silence him—tear ; these waves shall be his pall.

## XLI.

Speed, Argo, speed, ye streaming sails ne'er slacken  
God of the hour be favourable now ;  
Love, viewless lord, thy potent spells awaken,  
Kindle the kings and guide the flaming prow.

## THE VICTIMS.

### SONG THIRD.

#### I.

O SONGS enticing, sighs and artful threats  
That thrill the conscious air,  
Your demon cry who that has heard forgets,  
Beware, brave crew, beware!

#### II.

Hangs awfully on high the wavering scale,  
Decisive is the hour,  
Farewell to freedom bid if now ye fail,  
Heaven's grace and earthly power.

## III.

In valour tried, unhallowed snares resist,  
And our sad fate avoid,  
Unfaltering in your homeward path persist,  
Be not like us destroyed.

## IV.

All mariners who in this fatal bay,  
Their weary barque have steered,  
Have looked their last upon the light of day,  
None, none have reappeared.

## V.

Ay, all have perished by harsh fate undone,  
Their piteous ghosts are we,  
Mere voices inarticulate who moan,  
Unheard beneath the sea.

## VI.

Odysseus he alone, bound to the mast,  
With countenance all pale,  
This beaming shore beheld, and all aghast,  
Sped by with daring sail.

VII.

Pale was his face, and mute his stalwart crew,  
Deaf in that hour intense,  
Like spectres o'er the shining waves they flew,  
Unmoved—in hushed suspense.

VIII.

But ye unfettered, what will be your praise,  
If in the jaws of doom,  
Your kingdoms ye regain and peaceful days,  
Escape a living tomb !

IX.

Be not deluded by the glosèd lies  
Through which with practised art  
The subtle Sirens, steeped in sophistries,  
Besiege each yielding heart.

X.

Nor let the gods by their repulsive tales  
Be injured in your thought,  
Until—O sorrow !—your allegiance fails ;  
Be not by scorners taught.

## XI.

In high Olympus, their Elysian clime,  
Holy and pure they dwell,  
Beyond our praise and touched not by the slime  
Hurled at them from this hell.

## XII.

And though with mystery is veiled their course,  
Yet this full well we know,  
They of our strength and virtue are the source,  
The solace of our woe.

## XIII.

The cities gay fantastic with delight,  
With palace crowned and tower,  
To which their perjured promises invite,  
Endure but for an hour.

## XIV.

The portals are they of these dismal caves ;  
When ends delusion's reign,  
Cloudlike they disappear amid the waves,  
And these alone remain.

xv.

Their king misnamed, whom they pronounce so fair,  
As holy Love adored—  
How heavenly god can fiends thy semblance wear?—  
A monster is, abhorred.

xvi.

His mask seductive of soft loveliness,  
A hideous form conceals,  
His winning presence and benign caress,  
The adder's fang reveals.

xvii.

His name detested is insatiate lust,  
Sin, shame, and deadly sloth,  
The traitor's kiss, the dagger's poisoned thrust,  
All things that men most loath.

xviii.

The wretched thralls on whom his smile is cast  
Are doomed to sure decay ;  
Dissevered from the future and the past,  
Drifts by their useless day.

## XIX.

Seared by his glance our fate, alas, is sealed,  
We feel it all too well,  
The just decree will never be repealed  
That tolled our funeral knell.

## XX

Though thou, sweet Orpheus, with thy heavenly song  
Couldst rouse and lead us forth,  
In the loud world 'mid living men and strong  
We could not prove our worth.

## XXI.

The summer's softest sigh our palsied frame,  
Weak and outworn would chill,  
Choice benefits, o'erwhelmed with grief and shame,  
We should convert to ill.

## XXII.

The sun too fervid in the dazzling sky  
Would scorch us with his blaze,  
From festive scenes remorseful we would fly,  
Shrinking from every gaze.



XXIII.

Each eye to read our secret would appear,  
    Searching our laden breast,  
E'en pity's tender glance and falling tear  
    Would shake us from our rest.

XXIV.

Each instant stung and maddened thus with pain,  
    Too great to be endured,  
Our ocean haunts would know us soon again,  
    To solitude inured.

XXV.

Back o'er the shuddering ocean we would speed,  
    A wild and ghastly crew,  
To these dim caves where our sad hearts can bleed,  
    Hidden at least from view.

XXVI.

Our doom is sealed, the prey are we of death ;  
    Ye living men still strive,  
Too spent for conflict fails our gasping breath,  
    Save ye your souls alive.

## XXVII.

For our lost cause we make no further moan,  
For you our prayer ascends,  
To save our brothers, that sweet hope alone,  
Our soul new courage lends.

## XXVIII.

Press onward, onward still, though sorely tried,  
Bewildered and alarmed,  
Strength to those failing limbs will be supplied,  
And all escape unharmed.

## XXIX.

To Orpheus your great bard transcendent cling,  
By Phœbus bright inspired,  
By those glad anthems in the air that ring  
With zeal and virtue fired.

## XXX.

No Orpheus heaven vouchsafed to be our guide  
And passions wild allay,  
Or manhood's hope we had not thus belied,  
Fallen 'neath evil's sway.

XXXI.

The gods have suffered, let them heed in time,  
And answer your complaint,  
Flash radiant forth from heaven's cerulean clime,  
And succour ere ye faint.

XXXII.

Deaf to our woes, their thrones with piercing cries  
For your sake we implore,  
Speed golden warriors of the azure skies,  
And waft them from this shore.

XXXIII.

Our feeble moan and tremulous appeal  
Ye haply will not hear,  
Yet o'er your minds some influence thence may steal  
And in your progress cheer.

XXXIV.

And thou, O Orpheus, called to fortunes high,  
Of our doom sometimes think,  
Permit not, sacred Bard, our memory  
In utter night to sink.

## XXXV.

Our message to the world, O minstrel, bear,  
We charge thee by thy faith,  
The story of our life to all declare,  
And most unhappy death.

## XXXVI.

When hecatombs are reared on festive days,  
When glows the altar's flame,  
And torches bright in wreathed temples blaze,  
Prayers proffer in our name.

## XXXVII.

The friends who loved us once, O these beseech  
Our sad fate to deplore,  
To whom in vain these yearning arms we stretch,  
Their pardon to implore.

## XXXVIII.

Immortal thus in thy celestial song,  
Here let our sad lamp wane,  
Others through us will learn to war with wrong,  
And our loss prove their gain.

XXXIX.

Our sad defeat they will not then accuse,  
And death, e'en he perchance,  
Grown merciful, no longer will refuse  
To heal us with his glance.

XL.

O, hope divine, come sore affliction's friend  
And hush our bitter moan,  
Our weary woes at last in mercy end,  
Redeemer thou alone.

XLI.

Lo, dying thus, regretted by mankind,  
How blest will seem our doom,  
In human hearts beloved, a home we'll find,  
A temple there and tomb.

## SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS.

### SONG THIRD.

#### I.

Ho, phantoms deluded,  
Why war with your lot,  
Of pleasures denuded,  
In darkness to rot ?

#### II.

Why still passion-yearning,  
With hope that ne'er dies,  
These Greeks unreturning  
Pursue with your cries ?

III.

Will they in your favour  
In temples give praise,  
When soft torches waver,  
On high festive days ?

IV.

Will they your sad story  
In far lands proclaim,  
And win for you glory,  
Unmerited fame ?

V.

Believe it not, cravens,  
Your new dream dismiss,  
What false-throated ravens  
Have taught you amiss ?

VI.

No friend near or distant  
Shall early or late,  
Despite prayers persistent,  
Bewail your sad fate.

## VII.

No minstrel beguiling  
Narrate in his songs,  
Our triumphs reviling,  
The tale of your wrongs.

## VIII.

Your memory forgotten  
No place e'er shall find,  
'Mid men unbegotten,  
Beloved by mankind.

## IX.

Nor shall their denial  
To serve you with zest,  
Be brought to a trial ;  
A useless bequest.

## X.

Your prophecies baneful  
By reason decried,  
And warnings disdainful,  
We scorn and deride.



XI.

Our spells are potential,  
Our strong charms complete,  
These kings consequential  
Shall sigh at our feet.

XII.

E'en now hotly burning  
With strange lust and ire,  
They mock your fond yearning ;  
Cease then to aspire.

XIII.

Greece ne'er shall behold them,  
Though urgent your prayer ;  
Our arms will enfold them,  
Our pleasures ensnare.

XIV.

Our destined prize Argo  
Sea-faring no more,  
Unlade will her cargo  
On this gleaming shore.

## XV.

Her sailors, our minions,  
The sport of a day,  
Close furled her white pinions,  
Our call will obey.

## XVI.

With us they will wander  
'Mid visions of joy,  
The treasures here squander  
Of Hera's winged toy.

## XVII.

The splendours unguarded  
That blaze in her hold,  
The bright fleece discarded,  
Rich jewels and gold.

## XVIII.

Until passion-sated,  
Their dreams to dispel,  
We send them ill-fated,  
Your pale ranks to swell.

XIX.

In sepulchres dreary  
Emprisoned, forlorn,  
Where reigns the night weary  
That knows not a morn.

XX.

Death, too, most ungrateful,  
Refusing to save,  
With cruelty hateful,  
Denies you a grave.

XXI.

Too weak for escaping,  
Hope not e'en to die,  
Your caverns forsaking ;  
There languish and sigh.

XXII.

Endure there for ever  
Years endless of strife,  
There quaff with cold shiver,  
Drink deep death in life.

## XXIII.

Yet comfort take, weepers,  
Yield not nor despond,  
Confide in your keepers,  
For much who respond.

## XXIV.

Though others reject you  
And harshly despise,  
Not wont to neglect you,  
Your value we prize.

## XXV.

Our vassals obedient,  
Our strength who repair,  
No test nor expedient  
Shall teach us to spare.

## XXVI.

Though worn and affrighted  
Your tasks you fulfil,  
We see you delighted,  
With pleasure's soft thrill.

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XXVII.

Though muffled the voices  
Through dim waves that float,  
Our sweet band rejoices  
At each hollow note.

XXVIII.

We feed on your anguish,  
And feast on your moans,  
Are glad when you languish,  
Rejoice in your groans.

XXIX.

Your pain is our incense,  
Your passion our food,  
Your vanquished resistance  
Our red flowing blood.

XXX.

Your mildness and meekness  
But swell our renown,  
We wear through your weakness  
Dull dastards, our crown.

## XXXI.

Our kingdom's foundation,  
On dead hearts alone,  
With haughty elation,  
We rear our proud throne.

## XXXII.

E'en this is your portion  
To waste for our gain,  
Ye, manhood's abortion,  
Your lost souls in pain.

## XXXIII.

With sobs and lamenting,  
With tremors and fears,  
With futile repenting,  
With bitter salt tears ;

## XXXIV.

To fill with full measure,  
By sorrow supplied,  
Our sweet cup of pleasure,  
Our chalice of pride.

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XXXV.

Weep slaves then, complaining,  
Our tribute is due,  
Our spent vigour waning,  
As meet is, renew.

XXXVI.

Remit not your moaning  
The sad dirge rehearse,  
Your sorrows intoning ;  
We use you and curse.

## THE ARGONAUTS.

### SONG THIRD.

#### I.

BENEATH the clear sweet stream of Siren songs,  
And the high pealing, Orpheus, of thy lyre,  
A fitful wail we hear of bitter wrongs,  
That seems to tell of grief repressed and ire ;  
Faint as an autumn wind at night that sighs  
'Mid lonely tombs, and in the distance dies.

#### II.

Shrieks too and imprecations, laughter shrill,  
Flit by, as echoing that feeble moan,  
Wild, mocking cries the frightened soul that chill ;  
Half-heard a startled instant and then gone ;  
Cruel and swift, like the deep under-tow  
That drags the swimmer down to death and woe.



## III.

Now all is hushed, save the delicious strains  
Whose dulcet notes like silver bells resound ;  
The solace sweet of human wrongs and pains,  
And witness of the joys that here abound,  
Like nectar pure that thrill the soul elate,  
No purple wine doth so exhilarate.

## IV.

Shimmers with splendour soft the sapphire sea,  
And when athwart that emerald wall we gaze,—  
Vision divine of hope and ecstasy !—  
The ocean cities marvellous that blaze  
Beneath the lucent billows we behold ;  
Of jasper reared and gems and ruddy gold.

## V.

Gleaming self-luminous, how fair they stand,  
Brightening the sombre deep—strange and remote ;  
How hushed and tranquil is that mystic land,  
From whence, sweeter than song, soft voices float,  
And woo us flute-like thither to come down,  
And wear in regal state our destined crown.

## VI.

The purple vault a lustrous sheen assumes  
Fretted and woofed with cloudy canopies,  
Whose tents of gold the monarch sun illumes ;  
While tender Cupids peep with laughing eyes,  
And goddesses with roseate pinions soar—  
Ah, in their presence cravens would adore.

## VII.

In lovely groups o'er Argo's prow they bend,  
Unfurling their bright wings in wanton play,  
And now in shafts of golden light descend,  
And flit and hover o'er the rippling bay,  
'Twixt heaven and earth, more lovely than a dream,  
Reflected in the water's azure gleam.

## VIII.

Gemlike in that blue radiance burn the isles  
Where our bold suit the watchful Sirens wait ;  
Pacing that sea-swept shore with subtle smiles,  
With sweet lips song-enwreathed and looks elate ;—  
Ah, terrible—goddess or demon-wraith,  
Love beckons us, and 'neath our feet is death.

## IX.

From the dead past as from a dream we wake.  
Wherefore the proud Olympians have we served ?  
Dear happiness resigning for their sake,  
And woes enduring harsh and undeserved,  
At their command ? Enough of toil and fame,  
The idle counters of a useless game.

## X.

Do they exist our forfeit faith to flout ?  
Or in our thought alone do they abide ?  
Their offspring we are called, and yet we doubt ;  
For weak is man, and still a snare his pride ;  
Through our own madness have we been aggrieved ?  
Not called to our high quest, but self-deceived ?

## XI.

Bright Presences, ye who have seemed to bless,  
From heaven sent forth our weary course to guide,  
Our sorrowing hearts ; swift speeding to redress  
Our woes, and o'er the ocean broad and wide  
Pilot our barque ; were ye by fancy wrought,  
The fleeting visions of distempered thought ?

## XII.

Lo, we know not ; for shadowy now appear,  
Vague and impalpable as incense smoke,  
The splendid Deities whom without fear,  
At solemn eve and when the morning broke,  
We once adored. Pale are they—phantom pale ;  
And seem of their own coming fall to wail.

## XIII.

But if as we have deemed they live and reign,  
From these sad hearts no more let them exact  
Service forsworn ; by them tossed on the main,  
Lest our renown should from their fame detract ;  
Dread Zeus like great Prometheus we defy,  
And spurn on earth the tyrant of the sky.

## XIV.

What heed have they of man on their proud thrones,  
Though by his incense fed in pomp they dwell ?  
They answer not at all his heart-wrung groans,  
And mock his prayers when, as with us befell,  
Down steep declines they rush from bad to worse—  
Then let them take of misery the curse.

## XV.

Allegiance who would grant to gods debased,  
Who high enthroned on sacred rights intrude,  
By wanton crimes and cruelties disgraced,  
Fraud, treachery, and harsh ingratitude ;  
Friendship in them and holy love defamed,  
Monsters of lust, savage and unreclaimed ?

## XVI.

Ourselves of their injustice well can speak,  
Of cherished friends and kingdoms dispossess,  
That on our weakness they their strength might wreak,  
Hating mankind ; driven forth with wild unrest,  
To wail on distant shores our banishment,  
Till hope was quenched, and manhood's vigour spent.

## XVII.

O, not Prometheus chained and crucified,  
By the fierce talons of the vulture torn,  
More torments has endured with lofty pride  
Than we, the Argonauts ; sailors forlorn,  
By disappointment stung and hope deferred,  
Scourged by the gods whose glory we preferred.

## XVIII.

Or say we wrong them, to a glorious end  
Admit that they will lead us by blind ways,  
And in the destined hour at last befriend,  
And to our homes restore ; no meed of praise  
Should that late gift claim from our failing breath,  
Declined in weary age, the prey of death.

## XIX.

Then would await us the eternal grave,  
And gloomy Hades from whose lightless dark  
Not all the gods nor all the fates can save,  
While these brave forms lay buried stiff and stark ;  
Ah, heroes, cruel fortune tempt no more,  
Here end our sorrows on this happy shore.

## XX.

The Sirens call ; lo, wherefore do we quail ?  
Well knowest thou, Minstrel, with thy shrieking lyre  
Constraining us, though with resistance pale,  
'Gainst our own will to struggle and aspire,  
To suffer still, and wait. We sit aghast,  
Maddened by doubts and memories of the past.

## XXI.

Like eagles fierce, plume-ruffled, met for war,  
With clangour wild who each on other charge,  
Or thunder-clouds wind-borne, that from afar  
Together rush and fiery bolts discharge,  
Contending anthems hover in the air,  
Seeking alike to win us from despair.

## XXII.

Yet all in vain ; for neither doth control  
Our destiny ; by warring passions swayed ;  
Uncertain each perturbed and tortured soul  
Whose voice should followed be, whose will obeyed ;  
By Orpheus urged the stormy seas to range,  
Woody by the Sirens to sweet love's exchange.

## XXIII.

Thy counsel we reject, O Minstrel stern,  
And yet division thou hast power to sow  
In minds distracted unto thee who turn  
For wisdom's light. Hard doom to undergo,  
By thee bewildered are we in our course,  
Of resolution robbed and virile force.

## XXIV.

Hear then and heed. To yon light-beaming shore,  
Resolved at last, our purpose 'tis to wend,  
A kingdom there to found and roam no more ;  
With thee, or thee despite, we'll gain our end ;  
Aid us, or at the least avoid our wrath,  
Be not a stumbling-block in our swift path.

## XXV.

Come, tune thy lyre, by love's sweet dream possess,  
Merge with the Siren songs thy powerful voice,  
With bliss immortal thrill each fervid breast,  
As well thou canst : O, bid us, Bard, rejoice ;  
Betwixt us love shall bloom anew and peace,—  
Be thou our guide to this our new found Greece.

## XXVI.

If still defiant, tremble, faithless slave,  
Crouch at our feet and cower with baited breath,  
Lest plunged remorseless in the surging wave,  
Thou learnst too soon the taste of bitter death.  
Thou art one man ; many are we and strong ;  
Well-armed, nor to be daunted by thy song.



## XXVII.

Our sentence thou hast heard, and last appeal ;  
Yield up to us thy harp of discontent,  
Or at thy throat shall glisten the sharp steel,  
And from thy hand by these hands 'twill be rent ;  
Not Phœbus e'en shall shield thee from our might,  
Though with his bow he come and shafts of light.

## XXVIII.

Not all the gods united and in power,  
Too long obeyed and followed in the past,  
Could move us now ; predestined is the hour ;  
Our fetters harsh we break ; the die is cast ;  
Be golden Pleasure from this day our bride,  
Choose we in these bright islands to abide.

## ORPHEUS.

### SONG FOURTH.

#### I.

O MADNESS unimagined, hell-born fear,  
Delusions false and fantasy o'erwrought,  
Can ye of reason blind the vision clear,  
In noble minds, and wisdom bring to naught,  
Until, like witless birds, great kings are caught  
In cunning toils ! O heroes, fiend-assailed,  
Forbid ye now my voice so oft besought,  
While o'er strange seas companioned we have  
sailed ?

To win ye from despair have all my efforts failed ?

II.

With eyes of hate, O Argonauts beloved,  
 On me your Minstrel cherished once ye glare,  
 Evil ye bid me vaunt all unproved,  
 My sacred trust forego, and truth forswear,  
 Or to your vengeful swords this bosom bare,  
 Athirst for my warm blood. Ah, ah, in vain !—  
 No respite will ye grant—no moment spare ?  
 O, disappointment deep, and bitter pain,  
 Of thee, ingratitude, with sad heart I complain.

III.

Unhappy crew, bewildered thus and lost,  
 Seeking with frantic menaces and threats  
 My soul to change ; in your wild purpose crost,  
 E'en as the sounding sea the rock besets,  
 That checks its flow and with resistance frets,  
 Me would ye now o'erthrow ? With passion pale—  
 What spell infernal thus your fury whets ?—  
 My sacred life, e'en that would ye assail ?  
 And break these golden chords, high-shrieking their  
 death-wail ?

## IV.

Many are ye, and I one man and weak,  
'Tis true ; united ye, and I alone ;  
Come then, and on my breast your vengeance wreak,  
Come, smite me down with hard hearts changed to  
stone,  
Forgetful of the sacred memories flown  
That bound us in the past. With ruthless force,  
Unresting 'til the lapping waves make moan,  
Sweet music in your ears, o'er my slain corse,  
Like fierce wolves seize your prey, regardless of remorse.

## V.

Why tremble at my gaze and hesitate,  
Unused to falter thus in your designs ?  
What subtle power, strong as the word of fate,  
As when the sun on night's dim breast declines,  
Droops the wan day, your vigour undermines ?  
Behold your answer in this sacred prow,  
A throne of all the gods, bright Argo shines ;  
Enhaloed gleams my consecrated brow,  
And at my guarded feet celestial currents flow.

VI.

The bright Olympians, they who know not death,  
 From heavenly courts down-bending throng and  
 press ;  
 I feel commingling with the zephyr's breath,  
 Their radiant presence, and divine caress  
 Ineffable ; me wholly they possess ;  
 In vain, O recreant crew, shall ye assail,  
 My woes and wrongs assembled to redress,  
 That potent guard ; the strongest heroes fail ;  
 But who shall quell the gods, or bid heaven's warriors  
 quail ?

VII.

Lo, Pallas in her splendid armour nigh,  
 Throws round me her strong shield ; for my sake  
 leaves  
 Hera her glowing palace in the sky,  
 Armed, and in wrath ; heaven of her smile bereaves,  
 My soul to cheer, she who all woes retrieves,  
 The queen of Love ; Apollo glorious stands,  
 Lightning with scorn, and on his breast receives  
 My bleeding wounds. His awful bow he bends,  
 And through your trembling ranks his glance disdainful  
 sends.

## VIII.

Arouse ye wretched crew, to toil betake,  
Nor let these shining waters as they list  
Sway thus your passive barque ; from dreams awake,  
And fearful death as love disguised resist ;  
On ruin's verge from idle vaunts desist :  
My song shall yet your souls despairing save,  
And in your own despite force to persist  
In your appointed path ; mock ye or rave,  
Yet will I pluck ye forth, and rescue from the grave.

## IX.

Through pain and sorrow, lo, all things advance,  
The vital atom whirling grows apace,  
Till 'mid the throbbing stars it learns to glance,  
Moving majestic in airy space,  
A fiery splendour winged with life and grace ;  
Each soul grows great to dreadful toils exposed ;  
From birth obscure ascends each lofty race,  
Rich treasures in dark places are disclosed,  
Shines forth through death's chill gate the light of  
heaven disclosed.

X.

Lo, sink not then in this disastrous hour,  
 But from defeat and doom redemption win,  
 In deadly strife engaged with wingèd power  
 Come forth ; victorious in the battle's din ;  
 That conquest proud o'er death and subtle sin,  
 Shall glow and quicken in each brain and nerve,  
 And strength be yours new labours to begin ;  
 No more in doubt and peril shall ye swerve,  
 But unassailable a stedfast front preserve.

XI.

And ye, O heavenly cohort, crowned with light,  
 Who solace me and succour not in vain,  
 Gleaming e'en now irradiate on my sight,  
 Strengthen the wing of my ascending strain ;  
 And in ethereal heights my soul sustain,  
 Whilst now I sing of progress the great song,  
 Of fruitful joy made manifest through pain,  
 Of truth divine, and love than death more strong,  
 And right in every age victorious over wrong.

## XII.

The gods themselves make progress in the skies  
The lines successive in Olympus traced,  
From unbegotten gloom to being rise  
With higher attributes supernal graced  
Than knew their Sires ; who seemingly effaced,  
In their descendants live e'en when o'erthrown ;  
Each new dominion on the old is based ;  
The present of the past is still the crown,  
And in the fruitful day to-morrow's seeds are sown.

## XIII.

And they who sink in feeble age declined,  
Who in Olympian courts, torches consumed,  
Lamps emptied of their oil exhausted pined,  
Not vainly then in darkness are entombed,  
For in that low defeat they find relumed  
Their early vigour and primeval force,  
For uses new and other ends resumed,  
Replenishing the streams sprung from their source,  
Sustaining them for aye in their triumphal course.



XIV.

Move forward too from age to brightening age  
 Mankind ; by time and fate stern teachers taught  
 In nature's endless book a broader page,  
 With wisdom deep and rich experience fraught,  
 Reflected lightnings from the grey eld caught,  
 Each generation turns. Fearless they stand,  
 Fed by the past and by the future sought,  
 So live a fleeting day and give command,  
 Then sink on death's dark shore as waves break on a  
 strand.

XV.

In strife and sorrow born, through woe and strife  
 Wisdom by slow degrees they gain and power,  
 Touching in each new age a higher life ;  
 Though doomed to perish in their destined hour,  
 Though vexed by tempests that around them lower,  
 The blows of fortune boldly they confront,  
 Courage and hope immortal are their dower,  
 They meet with smile serene the battle's brunt,  
 And on the trophied field sink with enwreathed  
 front.

## XVI.

By their great heroes guided they advance,  
Sages and kings and bards of high degree,  
Who wield on battle fields the sword and lance,  
And truth in song reveal ; daring and free,  
Of glorious gods the splendid progeny,  
Strong, beautiful, and of ethereal strain,  
With evils they contend and bid them flee ;  
Stern labours they endure and grief and pain,  
To serve mankind and justice on the earth maintain.

## XVII.

Cities they build and stately nations found,  
And free from hostile foes ; by heaven inspired ;  
Hearing their praise in every land resound,  
By their high lineage immemorial fired,  
Honour they seek and fame by all desired ;  
Courage is theirs and lofty enterprise,  
And faith and virtue by their state required ;  
With daring deeds that e'en the gods surprise,  
They prove their grand descent immortal from the skies.

XVIII.

Loving their cause, to them their powerful aid,  
 The bright Immortals ever-watchful grant,  
 Defending them when treacherously waylaid,  
 And sore-beset. What truly shall they want  
 Who of that radiant guard can proudly vaunt  
 The fostering care ; whose worship they confess,  
 Nor hecatombs at their pure altars scant ?  
 Though rudely scourged, yet shall they find redress,  
 And learn in what strange ways the gods eternal bless.

XIX.

The races thus though twain are intertwined,  
 Linked still by mutual benefits and grace,  
 For endless time ; with destinies combined,  
 In heaven and earth one onward path they trace,  
 Beneath the smile of our great Father's face ;  
 Mankind though bound his weary barque to steer,  
 With sharp swift toil, runs with the gods one race,  
 And grander in his stature doth appear  
 In every age, though subject still to pain and fear.

## XX.

Naught passes, naught is lost, though all things  
change,  
The primal gods, evolved from night obscure  
And chaos wild, the universe still range ;  
And will through all eternity endure ;  
Bright Uranus gleams in the azure pure,  
E'en as of old ; and Rhea within the earth  
Incorporate dwells ; their voices sweet illure,  
Mingling with nature's strains of joy and mirth,  
The living gods and children all of mortal birth.

## XXI.

The ancient Titans too, that splendid race,  
Who in defeat lamented their lost reign,  
E'en through that fall found their appointed place  
And kingdom new. Regret subdued and pain,  
Learned they in time the new law to sustain,  
By time evolved ; when heaven again they sought,  
Once more of honour in Olympus fain,  
Or to mankind immortal blessings brought,  
Or in the nether world their tasks appointed wrought.

XXII.

And he who for mankind harsh fortune's blows,  
 The king of heaven defying for his sake,  
 Endures un murmuring ; whose tortured throes  
 In senseless things pity and ruth awake,  
 Likewise shall rest ; and peace with all partake ;  
 With Zeus immortal his foe reconciled ;  
 In that new life sweet love his thirst shall slake,  
 Far from the lonely peak savage and wild,  
 Where tortured now he hangs—throned in a kingdom  
 mild.

XXIII.

Asia divine with unveiled loveliness  
 Shall meet, awaited long, his glad embrace,  
 And all her woe and ecstasy confess ;  
 Transfigured too shall glow great nature's face,  
 Showing of sorrows past and wrongs no trace,  
 Renewed in that great day. Redeemed and blest,  
 His gifts will then create a mightier race,  
 'Mid whom he'll rear his throne, their king confest,  
 Or with dread Kronos rule the Islands of the Blest.

## XXIV.

In glory rose the fair gods of the past,  
And fell, so destined, in obscure decay,  
And to that changeless law must yield at last,  
Their bright successors and their doom obey ;  
The time will come—long be deferred the day—  
In ages of the future unrevealed,  
When heaven's resplendent host and proud array  
Shall sink and fade ; by dull oblivion sealed ;  
When Zeus no more shall reign or his dread sceptre  
wield.

## XXV.

Yet shall they live in every throbbing heart,  
Worshipped will be their memory and name ;  
Nature will be their shrine and sacred art,  
And their eternal throne incense reclaim,  
And every age their glorious state proclaim,  
Great Zeus, a splendid dream, shall haunt the skies,  
And Pallas, wisdom's child, lead on to fame,  
And Aphrodite still with amorous sighs,  
Thrill the enamoured breast with soft and sweet  
surprise.

XXVI.

For progress is of life a law divine,  
 Whoe'er the Deities in pomp and pride  
 Predestined in heaven's court henceforth to shine,  
 With them the present dynasty allied,  
 An influence supernal will abide,  
 And their descendants with their own life feed ;  
 Of later ages the appointed guide :  
 Springs the rich harvest from the fruitful seed,  
 And to each stately growth a nobler doth succeed.

XXVII.

But in time's fulness, in the day of days,  
 Whose peaceful noon shall garner and explain  
 The seasons of the past ; honour and praise,  
 The deities immortal shall attain  
 Of every age and clime ; in one grand fane,  
 O'erruled by Eros, the Eternal soul ;  
 In more than pristine glory they shall reign ;  
 Their presence felt and honoured their control ;  
 The rays of one bright sun, parts of a living whole.

## XXVIII.

O, now I see that ye at last are fired,  
The glowing spark flashes from eye to eye,  
Each soul with zeal contagious is inspired,  
And thrilled each heaving breast. Fly, heroes, fly !  
To question now pause not ; make no reply ;  
But praise the gods in silence and adore !  
The veil is lifted from the sea and sky,  
The storm-god speeds abroad ; I fear no more ;  
Awakened from your trance, escape this deadly shore.



## THE SIRENS.

### SONG FOURTH.

#### I.

O, HAPLESS man, most wretched of all creatures,  
Wasting in grief unrecompensed his day,  
Led by blind guides and maddened by false teachers,  
But at the last to be of death the prey.

#### II.

Princes undone, your faithless Bard misguided,  
Why suffer thus to turn you from your path?  
Falls the doomed house against itself divided,  
E'en from that hour the sport of fortune's wrath.

## III.

Shall from their purpose monarchs be diverted ?  
Swayed in their course by dreams and idle songs ?  
Rise in your might with vigour reasserted,  
Rise and revenge in time your bitter wrongs !

## IV.

Ardent, sublime, like stars new-kindled beaming,  
Hither erewhile ye sped with shout and cheer,  
Now homeward bound o'er waters darkly gleaming,  
Swift fleeing oars ye measure pale with fear.

## V.

Bold then, and free, with clashing swords that glittered,  
Fierce oaths ye pledged in courage ne'er to fail,  
Then Orpheus false denounced ye soul embittered ;  
Why falter now at his command and quail ?

## VI.

Too long delayed, your own resolve fulfilling,  
Roused yet again, O kings, your vengeance sate ;  
Dreams in each mind and false desires instilling,  
Judged let him be and sentenced ere too late.

VII.

Jason, high-souled, 'mid heroes all supernal,  
Wisdom who wooed in forest glen and mead,  
Thou who the fates hast braved and foes infernal,  
Be of the kings a saviour now in need.

VIII.

Rouse thee, brave chief, the gallant sailors martial,  
Guide of the quest and worthy to command,  
Thee they will heed for judgment famed impartial—  
Free them and lead rejoicing to our land.

IX.

Ah, thou art bound, though ne'er by foemen daunted,  
Fettered and foiled, O chieftain, by thy mate,  
Lo, far too much her loveliness was vaunted,  
Has not ere this thy passion turned to hate?

X.

Spurn for our sake the sorceress Medea,  
Tempt not thy doom, rash monarch, in her arms,  
Hecate's thrall, the fratricidress flee her,  
Traitorress forsworn, with bold and baneful charms.

## XI.

Spurn her and drown wild shrieking in the billow,  
Shrieking in vain with white lips flecked with foam,  
In oozy caves, with sea-weed bound and willow,  
Strangled, entangled, be henceforth her home.

## XII.

Smite too white-limbed fleet-footed Atalanta,  
Swift in the race and victor in the fray,  
Priestess of Artemis—no respite grant her—  
Subtle her power your freedom to gainsay.

## XIII.

Yield them, sweet kings, our destined prize surrender,  
Hope not to foil the fixed decrees of fate ;  
She whom ye woo not, seek not to defend her,  
Yours is our love, for these our deadly hate.

## XIV.

What, faithless hearts, deride ye our petition ?  
False as the wind, bold Fortune will ye dare ?  
Ah, heroes, pause, ye hasten to perdition,  
Not of these isles, of Grecian soil beware.

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XV.

Fools, of the gods invoke not the protection,  
Follow them not, or rue the bitter day ;  
Deadly, accursed, their love is and affection t,  
Slaves they enthrall, to madden and betray.

XVI.

Where, Bard, wilt seek Eurydice bewailing ?  
Orpheus in hell ~~go~~ parley for thy bride ;  
Bold art thou now to flee us, unprevailing,  
Where trait d'or then despairing wilt thou hide ?

XVII.

Hymning no more the haughty gods and vaunting,  
Thence thy sad song will murmur but her name,  
Dirge-like thy love bemoaning still and chanting,  
Pallid with eclipse thy once unclouded fame.

XVIII.

So will the gods uphold thee then and shelter ?  
Zeus will he aid, or Phœbus bright befriend ?  
Red on the plain thy reeking gore will welter,  
Furies unhidden slaughter thee and rend ?

## XI.

Thus, Miled drown wild shrieking in the billow,  
Thus head vain with white lips flecked with foam,  
Mænads will with sea-weed bound and willow,  
Swim shall thy dled, be henceforth her home.

## XX.

Ha! to the sorceress clingest thou Atalanta,  
Vengeance and doom are beaoning by,  
Build thy proud palace, build it, haughty  
Build broad and high to challenge fortune

## XXI.

When shall arrive the day of retribution, der,  
Caught in the toils which now thou wilt not flee  
How wilt thou 'scape Medea's persecution?  
How the red flames far-flashing o'er the sea?

## XXII.

Fair the young bride who woos thee o'er the water!  
She who shall free thy fickle heart of care,  
Win her, brave chief, her bride-bed blood and slaughter,  
Monarch dethroned and wedded to despair.

## IV.

## XXIII.

Fools, of the gods invoke not the protection,      ners defiant,  
 Follow them not, or rue the bitter day,      bold winners of the fleece,  
 Deadly, accursed, their love is and affection,      fortune uncompliant,  
 Slaves they enthrall, to madden and to      or golden prize to Greece?

## XXIV.

## IV

Where, Bard, wilt seek - all your meed be, hatred and dissension,  
 Orpheus in hell - n of the toil in which your life was spent,  
 Bold art thou or t-thronging woes, ingratitude, contention,  
 Where trait Doom and defeat, dethronement, banishment.

## XXV.

Hymning O, rather seek than thus besmirch your glory,  
 Then Deep in the waves a more befitting tomb,  
 Dirge Fallen in Greece, your fame is dead and story,  
 Pa Dead love seek not in vain to re-illuminate.

## XXVI.

So Nay, heroes brave, in ecstasies elysian,  
 Seek your release, in peace divine and rest,  
 Free in these isles from warfare and division,  
 Seek and attain the guerdon of your quest.

## XXVII.

Flash the swift oars receding in the distance,  
Pause, O delay, bethink ye ere too late,  
In our wild cries and passionate persistence,  
Hear and obey the call sublime of fate.

## XXVIII.

Still unresponsive, flee ye, cruel-hearted,  
Hence then, accursed, flee cowards base and slaves,  
Blow wintry wind in stormy glee upstarted,  
Whirl them and swirl, to base, dishonoured graves.

## XXIX.

Hence, ay, avaunt ! ye stern and wrathful faces,  
Tempt the wild waves made stormy by our curse,  
Dogged by our hate, though fleeing our embraces,  
Wrecked by our wrath, your coming doom rehearse.

## XXX.

High in the air, borne back o'er waters surging,  
Echo and ring, O Orpheus dread, thy lays,  
Still the doomed kings to flight phrenetic urging,  
Still to the gods Olympian giving praise.



XXXI.

Nature, too, greeting, rapt in adoration,  
Hymning o'erjoyed the happy day and night,  
In freedom sweet with frenzied exultation,  
Smiting thy lyre impassioned with delight.

XXXII.

Hateful the day is theme of thy laudation,  
Womb of the hours, renewed but to decay ;  
Bound in the ring dissolving of mutation,  
Children of Time, and ah, his hunted prey !

XXXIII.

Hateful the sun all red and lurid blazes,  
Scorching with flame the azure fields of air,  
Hot on the parched earth, roving, his eye gazes,  
Lo, we are sick of splendour fierce and glare.

XXXIV.

Hateful at night the purple vault far-gleaming,  
Quivers and throbs—the star-bespangled dome ;  
Faint in the gloom, of bliss untasted dreaming,  
Sick of the dark, unsatisfied we roam.

## XXXV.

Hateful art thou, profound and cruel ocean,  
Moaning with pain perpetual and unrest,  
Lashed by the winds to fury and commotion,  
Wrecking the fleets that wander o'er thy breast.

## XXXVI.

Hateful thy life is, Nature, all-prolific,  
Harlot o'erbold, inscrutable and base,  
Sepulchre foul and cradle beatific,  
Godheads and worms both warmed in thy embrace.

## XXXVII.

Hateful the gods are, bloated with assumption,  
They in Olympus haughtily who reign,  
Time they defy with arrogant presumption,  
Who yet by time shall stricken be and slain.

## XXXVIII.

Hateful is man, the jeer of fate and bubble,  
Dull clay annealed, enkindled by a spark,  
Born but to die, the heir of grief and trouble,  
Born to be quenched and swallowed by the dark.

XXXIX.

Scarce see we now Argo's sails afar flutter :

Ah, the hot heart and madness of the brain !

Shrill on the air wild furies shriek and mutter ;

Ah, the sick-throes, the ever-gnawing pain !

XL.

Demons misformed, ye rive our soul and harrow,

Beat in our pulse, in nerve and fibre yearn ;

Tortured, consumed, corroded bone and marrow,

Scorched with the flame that quenches not we burn.

XLI.

Palsied we sink, bloom-blighted, fade and languish,

Die futile songs extinguished with our breath ;

Gather the fiends who batten on our anguish,

Speeds the black shadow, insatiate death !

## THE VICTIMS.

### SONG FOURTH.

#### I.

FAREWELL, brave heroes, speeding o'er the main,  
With shout and cheerful song,  
The bounding billows cleaving once again,  
With glad oars, swift and strong.

#### II.

Your freedom ye have won, new hope, new life,  
O victory sublime !  
Be yours the guerdon of heroic strife,  
Immortal for all time.

III.

Each kingly brow shall wear a laurel crown,  
And to each grateful age,  
Word of this glorious day be handed down,  
Avouched by bard and sage.

IV.

Fear not the menaces that still pursue  
Your free and daring path,  
Seductive songs, that having failed to woo,  
Have changed to shrieks of wrath.

V.

The shores of Greece in triumph ye will gain,  
Heed well our prophecy ;  
Each monarch proud in his own kingdom reign,  
Live honoured, and so die.

VI.

And we henceforth in your great deeds will live,  
Friends cherished and endeared,  
And half forget in these dim caves to grieve,  
By your remembrance cheered.

## VII.

The strength once ours, a sacred legacy,  
Our lost life, once divine,  
To you our proud descendants, brave and free,  
We perishing resign.

## VIII.

Do greater deeds through that inheritance,  
And win a nobler fame,  
Our sword new-tempered and reburnished lance  
From dull disuse reclaim.

## IX.

Fail will we not to hear your good report,  
For in the sounding sea  
Reverberations of the world are caught,  
And of eternity.

## X.

The weltering waves that form our moving dome,  
With rumours strange are thrilled,  
To each sad soul that bring news of his home,  
Through watery depths distilled.

XI.

And in that sombre sheen, as in a glass,  
Strange pictures come and go ;  
Phantasmic visions of the things that pass  
On earth, flit to and fro.

XII.

With searching gaze, those ever-changing forms  
We mournfully peruse,  
And all unmoved by winds and surface storms,  
Naught therein imaged lose.

XIII.

The happy lands advancing we behold,  
And loved ones wooed with tears ;  
And mystic scrolls inscribed by sages old,  
Signs of the starry spheres.

XIV.

Whence wisdom deep we wrest from sorrows rude,  
Our prized though futile dower,  
The prey of grief, in dreaded solitude,  
We gain prophetic power.

## XV.

For souls unhappy, manacled by fate,  
Her awful secrets know,  
The recompense of their afflicted state,  
Sole respite of their woe.

## XVI.

The Sirens, foiled by your intrepid flight,  
Will wither now and pine,  
Deprived their fatal power the soul to blight,  
Their glory will decline.

## XVII.

And though immortal, though they cannot die,  
Yet in obscure decay,  
The chalice they will quaff of agony,  
Cursing their hour and day.

## XVIII.

E'en so when from their fangs Odysseus slipt,  
In loathsome forms debased,  
Like serpents scotched, of skin-deep splendours stript,  
They wandered forth disgraced.



XIX.

When all forgetful of their dungeon'd bane,  
By their own woes employed,  
A respite merciful from torturing pain  
Our helpless band enjoyed.

XX.

Until new evils the sad earth deformed,  
New suitors grace implored,  
And hideous rites by demons fell performed,  
Their baneful bloom restored.

XXI.

But in the world, if virtue should prevail,  
They'd sink to rise no more ;  
Their demon soul relinquish with a wail,  
And vanish from life's shore.

XXII.

To compass seek, O heroes, that great end ;  
Be this henceforth your quest ;  
Unhappy man, from their foul arts defend,  
Through your endeavour blest.

## XXIII.

Yet though they perish we are still their slaves,  
Too weak, heroic crew,  
Your flight to follow o'er the bounding waves,  
Swift fading now from view.

## XXIV.

The prisoners of the past, our dungeon barred  
No god nor man can ope ;  
All ye who enter, doomed and evil-starred,  
For aye abandon hope.

## XXV.

Not Zeus himself dull habit's chain can break,  
Or what is done undo,  
Or sin-enthralled, the nightmared soul awake,  
And with his smile renew.

## XXVI.

The fate that fetters us is our own life,  
A drear and blasted plain,  
A desert waste of arid woe and strife,  
Where terrors only reign.

XXVII.

Come witnessing against us the sad years  
Murdered by our abuse,  
The days that wept themselves away in tears,  
Outworn with weak misuse.

XXVIII.

See, see, they rise and through these caverns sweep,  
How wild they are and pale ;  
As living still they wring their hands and weep,  
How piteous is their wail.

XXIX.

In feeble arms they clasp us corpse-like cold,  
And their lost joys deplore,  
Love's cheerful smile and high deeds brave and bold ;—  
No more, ah, nevermore.

XXX.

Medusa-like is their fixed vacant stare,  
They freeze us with their sighs,  
O, ye who live, the phantom shapes beware,  
Whose chill glance petrifies.

## XXXI.

Reproach immortal glares in each dead eye,  
Maddening is their embrace,  
With dirge-like note monotonous they cry,  
Here is your fitting place.

## XXXII.

More cruel than the Sirens, hence, depart !  
Leave us to our despair ;  
Our breasts are pierced by many a poisoned dart,  
Each soul-nerve wrenched and bare.

## XXXIII.

In vain for us the glorious sun each day  
Shall kindle nature's face,  
In vain the stars, their own law that obey,  
At night illumine space.

## XXXIV.

Soft zephyrs all in vain of budded flowers  
Shall woo the fragrance rare ;  
With ordered flight in vain the changing hours  
Time's uses meet declare.

XXXV.

In vain the gods on high rejoice in heaven,  
Worshipped with awe and dread ;  
While man on earth gives praise at morn and even,  
By their wise guidance led.

XXXVI.

In vain for us, O Orpheus, grief and wrong  
Battling with thy sweet lyre,  
Of love and progress dost thou sing the song,  
Of passion and desire.

XXXVII.

For us in vain the promises of rest  
Breathed forth in heaven above,  
By him who rocks all beings on his breast,  
Eros, the viewless Love.

XXXVIII.

While all things else grow upward and advance,  
Beyond redemption's pale,  
We, god-forsaken, in our deadly trance,  
In slow extinction fail.

## XXXIX.

Hearken, O Death, no longer now withheld,  
Or to our prayer denied,  
Be with these bones thy rage for one day quelled,  
And hunger satisfied.

## XL.

Dread angel of oblivion and black fate  
At once seal our probation,  
Thy soundless sea of solace we await,  
Silence—annihilation.

## SIRENS REPLYING TO THEIR VICTIMS.

### SONG FOURTH.

#### I.

ACCURSED be your mumbling  
Re-echoed, lost slaves,  
By thunder's low rumbling  
And bellowing waves.

#### II.

While flees, her doom seeking,  
The ship o'er the bay,  
Borne forth by winds shrieking,  
Dashed ghost-like with spray

## III.

Hence bearing—O anguish !  
The Argonauts bold,  
While vainly we languish,  
Shrunk, withered and old.

## IV.

Be Orpheus curse-maddened,  
The lord of the band,  
Who roused them and gladdened,  
And lead from our land.

## V.

By music delivered,  
Redeemed by a song,  
Weak cowards, white-livered,  
Detestable throng.

## VI.

Though kings in appearance  
The offspring of gods,  
Through his interference  
Mere dullards and clods.



VII.

Accursed may they all be,  
Each hero undone  
By fate, ay, they shall be ;  
Their wild course is run.

VIII.

With dread incantatione  
All nature subdue,  
In death's devastation  
Our power they will rue.

IX.

Rise billows high surging,  
The traitors o'erwhelm,  
Down-hurled, the earth purging,  
To Hades dark realm.

X.

Earth, air, fire, water  
Against them conspire,  
With swift-speeding slaughter  
Fulfil our desire.

## XI.

Accursèd be Argo,  
With spirit imbued,  
Through Hera's embargo,  
Our spells that withstood.

## XII.

Accursed be and scouted,  
For ever the day  
That sees us thus routed,  
And doomed to decay.

## XIII.

And ye who betrayed us,  
The scoff of the waves,  
Denied and gainsayed us,  
And mocked in your caves.

## XIV.

Ye, loathed and detested,  
Be blasted for aye,  
Who dared, fiend-infested,  
Our wrath to defy.

XV.

Your croaking narrations  
Our kingdom defamed,  
Your mad revelations  
Our danger proclaimed.

XVI.

Your fulsome applauding,  
Faint whispers half heard,  
Their destiny lauding,  
The sad heroes cheered.

XVII.

Your shrill cries appealing,  
A phantom-like scream,  
Our terrors revealing,  
Disturbed their fond dream.

XVIII.

Your prayers and petitions,  
And warnings unsought,  
And wild admonitions,  
To them counsel brought.

## XIX.

Your stern exhortations  
Enkindled their pride,  
Your fond supplications  
Gave strength to their guide.

## XX.

The Bard all divining,  
Heard well your complaint,  
And him, unrepining,  
But drooping and faint,

## XXI.

O'erwhelmed with deep sadness,  
You helped re-inspire ;  
Awoke the seer's madness,  
Gave voice to his lyre.

## XXII.

Prepare now, sea-serpents,  
Our vengeance to feel,  
Aghast hear, delinquents,  
Your doom, past repeal.

XXIII.

No rich booty gaining,  
Dead loves we'll consume,  
Our spent beauty waning,  
Ghoul-like re-illumine.

XXIV.

Come forth, terror-haunted,  
At last ye are free !  
Come, gods, spell-enchanted !  
The dead yield, O sea !

XXV.

Hèr mould to recover,  
And sap reinforce,  
As earth, the fond lover,  
Corrodes the blue corse ;

XXVI.

As crawling worms fatten  
And gloat on the breast,  
On dead beauties batten  
Once fondly carest ;

## XXVII.

Entrapt in the bower,  
Tongue-tied and alarmed,  
As serpents devour  
The bird they have charmed,

## XXVIII.

With proud crests dilated,  
Engorge with delight,  
The sweet morsel fated,  
Still mute with affright ;

## XXIX.

As quagmires quaking,  
Strayed wand'ers ensnare,  
At night dimly shaking,  
Whose doom none declare ;

## XXX.

And children ungrieving,  
With horrible throes,  
Suck down, deeply heaving,  
Where verdure ne'er grows ;

XXXI.

The pride of the mother  
Who weeps unreprieved ;  
In sodden slime smother  
The dearly beloved ;

XXXII.

As Death the insatiate  
With skeleton jaw,  
Lank fingers emaciate,  
And cavernous maw,

XXXIII.

Goes forth all subduing  
Each day to his feast,  
All creatures undoing,  
Slave, monarch, and beast

XXXIV.

In vain his dart fleeing,  
For his pasture bred,  
With rayless orbs seeing,  
With carnage full-fed ;

## XXXV.

E'en so ye tormenting,  
We yet shall survive  
Your shrieks and lamenting,  
Our strength will revive.

## XXXVI.

Dread Zeus, they illude us,  
O deadly embrace !—  
Why, god, thus delude us !  
Shall lost souls find grace ?

## XXXVII.

Their last prayer they mutter,  
How glazed grows each eye,  
Faint sighs gasp and flutter,  
Unpitied they die.

## XXXVIII.

No more to awaken  
Death seals their release,  
The despised and forsaken  
Now rest find and peace.



XXXIX.

On high thunders rumble :  
Ye waves black as pitch,  
These dead bones that crumble,  
As feedeth the witch

XL.

Her cauldron that bubbles  
At day's dull decline,  
Woes brewing and troubles,  
To you we consign.

XLI.

Wild shrieks the wind moaning,  
Upheaves the blue bay,  
We sink, anguish-groaning,  
Die—wither away.

XLII.

Arouse ye hell's legions,  
Assist in our need,  
Stream forth from strange regions,  
On earth sorrows breed.

## XLIII.

Wake sins that have slumbered,  
Thrive evil and pain,  
Come victims unnumbered,  
Renewing our reign.

## XLIV.

Though slain yet immortal,  
Requicken our breath,  
Lead us back o'er life's portal,  
Victorious o'er death.

## THE ARGONAUTS.

### SONG FOURTH.

#### I.

SHRILL shrieks through Argo's shrouds the whistling  
blast,

Let loose from the chill caverns of the east ;  
All sails are set ; quivers the bending mast ;  
The churning waters labour white as yeast ;  
Welcome, O boundless ocean, broad and free,  
Our sharp keel cleaves once more the open sea.

#### II.

Welcome, ye leaping billows dashed with spray,  
Thou stormy wind waked by the Sirens fierce,  
Ye threatening clouds that o'er the watery way  
Gather tumultuous with their deadly curse ;  
Yield not, ye straining oars, with which amain  
Captivity we flee and endless pain.

## III.

Welcome, adventure wild and perilous strife,  
Danger and toil anew we now embrace,  
We seek anew the battle-field of life,  
Nor fear in sooth the frown of nature's face,  
Welcome, O freedom, thou the hero's bride,  
Won on the stormy sea in manhood's pride.

## IV.

Ye elements, aroused to furious war,  
Ye clouds that bend and mountain waves that rise  
In conflict dire ; ye thunderbolts that jar,  
And flashing lightnings forked that rend the skies ;  
Ocean reverberating their affray,  
We join you, and rejoice in your wild play.

## V.

Poseidon proud, uplift thy haughty head,  
Come, Boreas, from thy caverns in the north,  
Behold, ye gods, by deadly witchcraft bred,  
The tempest by unruly time brought forth ;  
Blow, winds, and bear us to the shores of Greece,  
Still gleams in our stronghold the guarded fleece.

## VI.

O happy Bard, fulfilled thy soul's desire,  
Our beacon-light, sweet Orpheus in the storm,  
Outpealing with thine own the tempest's lyre,  
How lordly now shows thy triumphant form !  
Lo, on thy brow Apollo's shafts descend,  
The radiant gods sublime still o'er thee bend.

## VII.

Redeemer in our sad and desperate strait,  
Minstrel, our praise receive. Thy song's delight,  
When trembled in the scale our doubtful fate,  
Like wax each yielding heart, led us aright ;  
And when all lost appeared—O fatal hour !—  
E'en then thy lyre's appeal renewed our power.

## VIII.

Those golden singing chords which we, undone,  
With ruthless hands to seize and shatter sought,  
Hopeful to see thy tower of life o'erthrown,  
And all our glory to destruction brought ;  
On thee with frantic rage stormlike we dashed,  
But paused in time, bewildered and abashed.

## IX.

Now, Orpheus, to thy friends pardon accord,  
And in our favour the high gods intreat ;  
Lest they should flash against us their strong sword,  
Condemned on high to suffer new defeat  
For that great crime. Heed, gentle Bard, our prayer,  
Rescued by thee, thy rapture let us share.

## X.

Once more the ardent current strong we feel  
That glows and courses in all human veins ;  
Share we the chequered life of woe and weal,  
The life, whose woven threads are joys and pains,  
Of all mankind ; welcome sweet human race ;  
One path with yours our feet henceforth will trace.

## XI.

The common dear delights will now be ours,  
The monarch and the slave alike that please,  
That feed in each day's flight the fruitful hours  
With full content. In homes of pleasant ease,  
With grateful hearts our destined cup we'll taste,  
Nor in the treacherous sea our treasures waste.

## XII.

The bride beloved shall cling to our warm breast,  
And children at our feet like palm-trees grow,  
And loyal friends serve us with eager zest,  
The source from whence to all rich blessings flow ;  
While our great deeds are chanted in sweet lays,  
And served the gods with sacrifice and praise.

## XIII.

Thus proudly in our kingdoms we will reign,  
With our inheritance long-lost endowed,  
Promised of old ; of our true friendship fane,  
Our glory by all lands will be avowed ;  
Nor idly will we rest, the past to shame,  
But stirred by emulation win new fame.

## XIV

Men rescued from the swirling waves half-drowned,  
When by wise care to happy life restored,  
Tell fearfully, in that terrific swoond,  
While in their reeling sense the waters roared,  
How memory stung them like a cruel snake,  
In seeming death with tenfold power awake.

## XV.

For in a lightning's flash their forfeit life,  
As when in some old book the leaves unfold,  
Inscribed with many a tale of woe and strife,  
In that appalling instant they behold ;  
The action of each day, ay, every thought,  
Before them swims, to recollection brought.

## XVI.

No act, howe'er abhorred, can be erased  
From the dark record of that fatal page,  
No image there abolished or retraced,  
But all must stand for aye, from age to age ;  
And noble deeds with a strange lustre shine,  
And fill the volume with a light divine.

## XVII.

And as that book is will their sentence be,  
When gloomy Styx bewailing they have crost  
In Charon's barque ; brought from the bitter lea,  
Where ghosts assemble nipt by death's sharp frost ;  
'Mid living souls who never more can dwell ;  
Then are they judged for weal or woe in hell.



## XVIII.

So we, awaking now as from a trance,  
In one fierce lightning flash of joy and pain,  
With gasping breath and shuddering backward  
glance,  
The deadly loss behold and deathless gain,  
For which like reckless gamesters we have played  
With fevered brain ; nor the true issue weighed.

## XIX.

The Sirens, in our eyes who seemed so fair,  
Trembling with shame and horror we behold,  
In their true shapes revealed. Wildly they glare,  
Deformed and monstrous, withered, palsied, old,  
Like spectres dim in sepulchres who moan,  
Eidolons false of beings dead and gone.

## XX.

The shrieks inhuman, taunts and biting jeers,  
Like hissing snakes that lashed the beating brine,  
Our own hearts chilling with unuttered fears,  
These too in their dread meaning we divine ;  
Ah, how they tortured their unhappy thralls,  
Each cruel word roused memory recalls.

## XXI.

Sighs back to us no less the sad complaint  
And last appeal of those poor souls undone,  
Their plaintive admonition, low and faint,  
Their prayer heart-rending, and despairing moan ;  
To save us in our bitter need they sought,  
Although themselves with misery distraught.

## XXII.

O brothers, brothers, helpless and forlorn,  
We heard ye not, nor answered your sad call,  
Nor shielded from the Sirens' cruel scorn,  
Nor lifted with kind hand your shrouding pall,  
Of grief and fear ; lo, now with anguish pale  
Your mournful fate and sad death we bewail.

## XXIII.

Ourselves with strange enchantment were possest,  
Yet shall your prayers, we pledge our kingly truth,  
To no dull churls but loyal souls address,  
Moved for your sake with pity deep and ruth,  
In years to come be one and all fulfilled,  
And human hearts by your sad story thrilled.

## XXIV.

Your crumbling bones, devoured by the false wave  
Whose treachery ourselves too well have proved,  
Due honour shall not lack, nor yet a grave  
Where bards your tale shall tell. There far removed  
A stately tomb for your sake shall arise,  
In distant lands, beneath your native skies.

## XXV.

Prayers shall be proffered in your name and  
breathed,  
And hecatombs be reared on festive days,  
And altars pure with chaplets fresh enwreathed,  
And glowing torches burn, and priests give praise ;  
For much, to aid our cause, though weak ye dared,  
And we unaided would your doom have shared ;

## XXVI.

And still may share—the storm-fiend wildly raves,  
No ship this seething ocean can outride,  
Tossed to the blazing clouds by boiling waves,  
And deep as hell, engulfed by furrows wide  
That yawn between. O, heart-afflicting fate,  
Our freedom we have won, too late—too late !

## XXVII.

Horror and fear congeal our vital soul,  
What! shall we perish thus, when all is said?  
Sucked down by this dread sea to grief and dole,  
Redeemed but to be mingled with the dead?  
The gods whom we defied their power assert,  
And in revenge our falling cause desert.

## XXVIII.

Save us, O Orpheus, in our utter need,  
On this witch-ridden ocean tempest-tost;  
Plead with the gods, for our forgiveness plead,  
Lest wrecked we sink with all our treasures lost;  
Our strength has failed—a wild and 'wilderer throng  
Our sole dependence now thy sacred song.

## ORPHEUS.

### SONG FIFTH.

#### I.

THE storm so fearfully that raged has past,  
By spells invoked. By zephyrs mild carest,  
While flees to Boreas' cave the howling blast,  
Calm as an infant on his mother's breast,  
Soothed tenderly to soft and slumberous rest,  
The ocean smiles. Let now all terrors cease,  
The day is ours ; your crimes have been confest ;  
Sweet nature of forgiveness sighs and peace ;  
And in the distance gleams, long-sought, our well-loved  
Greece.

## II.

Lovely is nature, fair her face divine :  
The bright sun rises from the ocean's tide,  
And, shaking from his brow the glittering brine,  
Looks forth o'er his dominions, broad and wide,  
With golden smile ; the sweet day is his bride,  
And his gay children the swift-speeding hours,  
That with the clouds, with quivering splendours  
    dyed,  
Frolic on high, or sport 'mid earthly bowers ;  
The meadows 'neath their tread are strewn with bursting  
    flowers.

## III.

Fair is the lovely night, e'en as the day,  
Whose purple dome, gloom-veiled, the soft stars fret  
In their uncounted hosts and bright array :  
The glimmering constellations rise and set,  
Nor e'er their destined course and path forget,  
But move majestic through the vault immense,  
Chanting sweet strains that human souls regret,  
Unheard by man's more gross intelligence,  
But hearkened by the gods with ecstasy intense.

IV.

The ocean ebbs and flows by day and night,  
 When from the morning's brow the clouds unfold,  
 The sun casts o'er the waves a path of light,  
 Sparkling beneath his smile and kisses bold ;  
 And 'neath the stars and chaste moon pure and cold  
 Softly they rock, chanting their lullaby,  
 Young as the hours and as the ages old,  
 Filling the fragrant gloom with melody,  
 The anthems that the sea sings ever to the sky.

V.

The wandering winds and waters wild embrace ;  
 In freedom unconfined the zephyrs roam,  
 Rippling with laughter sweet the ocean's face,  
 Crisping the tossing waves with glancing foam,  
 Or whirling them to the tempestuous dome  
 Arching on high, with stormy clouds o'ercast ;  
 The wild winds on the ocean are at home,  
 Sweet breezes soft as memories of the past,  
 And with destruction winged the hurricane's fierce blast.

## VI.

The ocean and the zephyrs sing one strain,  
For ever blent their voices wild and sweet,  
Of rhythmic change they sing, and joy and pain,  
Of order, and succession, gain, defeat ;  
Of passion and the deep heart's measured beat,  
Of desolation and sweet loveliness,  
Too bright to last ; of harmony complete ;  
Of beauty which no language can express,  
Of rage ; of ecstasy, and love's divine caress.

## VII.

Fair is the lovely earth, lapped by the sea.  
Amid the groves flicker the sunbeams warm,  
The zephyrs toss their boughs melodiously,  
And stir the meadows flecked with golden gleams,  
Where rivers softly flow and flashing streams,  
'Mid banks of flowers ; and still the hum is heard  
Of cheerful men aroused from happy dreams ;  
Ardent they seek their tasks too long deferred,  
And satisfy each claim with joy and pride incurred.



VIII.

Sweet nature they with fruitful toil adorn,  
 The fields embellished by their watchful care  
 Delight with floral wealth the dewy morn ;  
 The desert at their bidding blossoms fair,  
 And golden harvests wave their yellow hair ;  
 Cities they build that, towering to the skies,  
 Their pomp in many a prosperous state declare ;  
 They sail the stormy seas with high emprise,  
 And honouring the gods grow fortunate and wise.

IX.

These they adore, and serve with tribute meet,  
 Devoutly worshipping each holy name,  
 Bringing to their rich temples offerings sweet ;  
 When clouds of incense, touched with living flame,  
 Ascend to heaven, from altars free from blame ;  
 And music swells, and stands the white-robed priest  
 Exalting of each deity the name ;  
 To them they sacrifice the lordly beast  
 When wails the funeral hymn and at the marriage feast.

## X.

Then legends of the sacred gods they chant,  
How with wise care Prometheus brought them fire  
They gladly tell, when vexed by barren want ;  
How Hermes wrought Apollo's golden lyre ;  
How Aphrodite quickens sweet desire,  
And Zeus the hero crowns with state and power ;  
How Pallas bids the yearning soul aspire,  
And with heroic toil each passing hour  
Of happiness untold and pleasures rich deflower.

## XI.

Thus still to heaven ascends their song of praise,  
And subject though they dwell to time and fate,  
Not all unblessed speed by their mortal days ;  
The gods themselves their woes ameliorate,  
And leading upward to a nobler state,  
The secrets of the coming time reveal  
To their great souls, when a new race elate  
Shall rule the earth in unexampled weal ;  
And the great book of Time with profit lore unseal.

XII.

Fair are the lesser gods of earth and air ;  
 Forth from the trees young Dryads archly peep,  
 Step from the boughs and wave their nut-brown  
     hair,  
 While at their call the sly gods softly creep,  
 From their ripe lips harvests of kisses reap,  
 And with them 'mid the flickering shadows dance ;  
 Sweet water-nymphs in crystal fountains leap,  
 And mark the sunbeams in the water's glance ;  
 On flowery meads wild fauns and frolic satyrs dance.

XIII.

Each joyous morn their wild sport they renew,  
 While in the nights as well their pleasures thrive,  
 With furtive glee all nature they imbue ;  
 With mermaids sweet the ocean is alive,  
 Who from the bounding billows grace derive,  
 And lovely shapes glow in each element,  
 In whose swift veins ethereal juices thrive,  
 With natural forms and forces subtly blent,  
 Peopling the solid earth and boundless firmament.

## XIV.

Thus everywhere is life rejubilant,  
O'er every realm bright deities preside,  
Who nature's loveliness and rapture vaunt ;  
Immortal on the viewless wind they ride,  
And care and grief with soulless glee deride ;  
Less than the gods and less than suffering man,  
Still blest they live and ever shall abide,  
In forest glooms, sea-grots, and fountains wan,  
The subjects wild and free of everlasting Pan.

## XV.

These are the chords of nature's symphony,  
To which the gods on high attention lend,  
The varied strains of that great harmony  
Which bards alone, when skies star-paven bend,  
With palpitations soft on earth attend,  
And throes divine—re-echoed by my lyre—  
Whose swelling notes with nature's voices blend,  
The strains that quicken in each soul desire,  
Bidding the god within to heavenly realms aspire.

XVI.

This is the diapason, sweet and strong,  
 Of man's great heart that tells the joys and pains,  
 Which I resume in one immortal song,  
 Whose rhythmic flow for ever swells and wanes ;  
 Wild hearts are vanquished by my soothing  
     strains,  
 Stones petrified my liquid anthems move,  
 The slave is freed, the captive breaks his chains,  
 With happy heart o'er land and sea I rove,  
 Singing the song of peace, of freedom, and of love.

THE END.



